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JOURNAL OF INDIAN RENAISSANCE

Founded by  
K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAU

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No 65



Editor  
BHAVARAJU NARASIMHA RAO

Vol. 53

April - June 1984

No 1







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# TRIVENI

JOURNAL OF INDIAN RENAISSANCE

Founded in 1928

Vol. 53 No. 1

April - June 1984

*Founded by*

**K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAU**

*Editor*

**BHAVARAJU NARASIMHA RAO**

*Associate Editor*

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**TRIVENI PUBLISHERS Pvt., Ltd.**

**MACHILIPATNAM - 521 001**

**Andhra Pradesh**



## INFORMATION ABOUT 'TRIVENI'

'TRIVENI' is published during April, July, October and January — a new Volume commencing in April, every year. Subscriptions may begin with any Number but no enlistment will be made for periods of less than a year.

### RATES OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

	<i>Surface Mail</i>	<i>Air Mail</i>
India and Sri Lanka	Rs. 35	—
Burma and Pakistan	55	Rs. 75
Other Asian Countries	55	75
North America	US \$ 12	US \$ 20
United Kingdom and Europe	£ 6	£ 12
Africa	Rs. 55	Rs. 120
Australia	A \$ 8	A \$ 15
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EDITED, PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY BHAVARUJU NARASIMHA RAO  
AT THE TRIVENI PRESS, MACHILIPATNAM - 521 001



## ART, SCIENCE AND CULTURE

Dr. MALCOLM S. ADISESHIAH

*Formerly Deputy Director-General, UNESCO  
and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras*

### Art as Beauty and Science as Truth

We are familiar with the haunting words from the "Ode on a Grecian Urn":

Beauty is Truth,  
Truth Beauty—that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Similar are the words of Gurudev Tagore:

Let us stand firm and suffer  
With strength for the true  
With freedom for beauty.

And the words of Ramakrishna's disciple are haunting:

The search of the mind for beauty and truth  
Is the search for God.  
That way lay real happiness and true progress.

The question that one may legitimately ask is—Are these thoughts of merging of beauty and truth, these lines which relate art to science and science to art, a mere flight of poetic imagination, and the mere passionate outpouring of a religious mystic? Or, is there really truth in beauty which is science in art, and beauty in truth, which is art in science? When Yama says to Nachiketa that "fools dwelling in darkness but thinking themselves wise and erudite, go round and round in circles by various tortuous paths", or when Sri Ramakrishna says, "By adding many zeros together you gain nothing, they have no value" and "Can any pearl be found in knee-deep waters? If you want to realise Him, dive down into the very depth of the ocean", and when King Solomon compares the Shulamite's neck to "an ivory tower", a scientific statement or discovery is being made through using a parable



like the pearl and ocean, or seeing an analogy like the circle and the round and the fool, or like the ivory tower and the neck, which no one has seen or spoken of before. This language describes a process that is basic to the art of discovery as well as the discovery of art. The language which uses the round and the circle in art has its equivalent in biology or the zero its counterpart in mathematics, or the depth measure (by the knee) its counterpart in physics, or the ivory tower its counterpart in mathematics. The merging of science and art is seen when mathematicians speak of the dance of numbers, or the astronomers of the music of the spheres.

Not only in language but more generally, science and art are two sides of the same coin. They inhabit the same universe, as each projects his or her understanding of reality in the chosen medium. They are judged by the norm of excellence, as tested by the scientist in experiments and the artist in aesthetics. If the former is popularly termed objective and the latter subjective, these terms are merely relative, as is demonstrated by the history of science which is the story of discarded theories, similar to the recasting of values, the restructuring of criteria of relevances, and the turn around of frames of perception which are equally the history of art. They both have the same zigzag-course of progress — the artist in a succession of classicism, romanticism, naturalism, impressionism and surrealism, alongside of the religious story, the social novel, the existential romance, even as the physicist passes from the Aristotelian to the Newtonian, to the Einsteinian and back to the counter-Einstein conception of the cosmos, with similar gyrations that we can see in the progress of medicine, agronomy and psychology. They each follow the same technique of abstraction by selective emphases, selecting and highlighting those facets of reality which he or she considers important, classing the rest as irrelevant. Thus whether it be a landscape or portrait painting, or the play concerning the Postman, or the Survey of India's map, the technique is the same, the criterion a subjective sense of relevance and the medium, of course, different. Finally, every valid scientific discovery is for its author an exercise in beauty, as Jagadish Chandra Bose's discovery of plant life was the outcome of his view of the beauty and unity of all life, as C. V. Raman's Frequencies and Effect was his means of creating harmony out of dissonance. Similarly, the artist experiences his expression of beauty when his mind tells him that what he has created is true, as endorsed by his form of experience. At first blush, this may seem a somewhat daring comparison of science and art. What, it may be asked, is the commonality between Roy Chowdhury's



pastoral scene which we identify with beauty, and Ramanujam's mathematical equation which is the high watermark of pure truth. It was Ramanujam's Cambridge tutor, G. H Hardy, who tells us that Ramanujam's discoveries expressed in his equations were his half conscious search for "mathematical beauty for the harmony of numbers, for geometric elegance". He and our outstanding physicist who got the Nobel Prize believed that it is more important to have beauty in one's equations than to have them fit one's experiment." Similarly, Roy Chowdhury states that he has been guided by scientific theories by the geometry of perspectives, and lines, and for shortening. Thus the scientist who says he depends on his intuition to guide his theorizing, and the artist who relies on abstract principles to discipline his intuition, seem to be in an inescapable complementary relationship, with only varying proportions of dependence of each on beauty and truth.

### **Alienation of Science and Art**

We should now turn to the other side — the unbeautiful side, the untruthful facets — of Science and Art.

I begin again with the positive purity of science and art. As religions and all cultures speak of the original language of man being art and science, the first words covering simultaneously music, poetry and science. The Christian, Moslem and Hindu scriptures say that in the beginning was the Word, was Om. The agnostic Valluvar of my state opens his famous poem *Kural* two thousand years ago with the words, "In the beginning the Word was created and the Word is the original God." In that state, the same word stood for science and art, the distinction between song and science, between the so-called sacred and the so-called profane or secular had not emerged. The Word invested with a holistic meaning applied to each situation and satisfied all. Everything to which man gave a name was God to him or some aspect of God by delegation, so that by virtue of a benevolent revelation or human inspiration, the Word combined the fullness of knowledge (science and truth) with the fullness of the melody which expressed it (art and beauty). That is one reason why in all cultures the first written words are the scriptures, and the first music, dance and architecture are its expression—combining beauty and truth. We have gradually left behind this stage of our life, when man was not separated from man, when man was not removed from nature as its conqueror, or from God as the source of all values.

Today we have not only separated science from art, we have made science the black magic of society and technology the wand which ushers in its wonders. And so our measuring rod is the



number of engineers, scientists, and technicians that we have and must continuously produce in order to be ranked as the third largest stockholder of science and technology in our world. We want all our people, the children in schools, the illiterate adults in our villages, to be oriented towards the sciences. The status of the country today is measured not by the power of the Word (truth and beauty), but by the density of engineers and scientists per million of the population. This transcendent illiteracy which represents one of the most pernicious forms of nihilism has produced for us the scientific and technological obscurantism which the atomic scientists and their social product, the suffering people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, represent. Stuffed with equations, hallucinated by figures and diagrams, they march onward from conquest to conquest which leaves no room for beauty or culture. Without this cultural ballast, they swing from mental depression to high treason. Thus it is pointed out that one of our leading atomic scientists, Robert Oppenheimer, with whose name the atomic cataclysms of our times are associated, even while still continuing his equations and calculations for the atom bomb, finally discovered the road to peace of mind in Indian culture and its traditional wisdom, which teaches the vanity of all calculations and the ontological nullity of the technological adventure in which he was engaged.

This degeneration of science that I am referring to is not only in regard to its application or misapplication to man and society. Today's pure science and its extension into technology do not open into the world of values. Science and technology can be developed from one area to another *ad infinitum*, without encountering the contradiction that such a divorce sets up. Thus we have countries which have used science and technology to attain the highest levels of living, to abolish poverty and material want, to possess an abundance of bathrooms, refrigerators, television sets, cars, razors, and other consumer goods, good housing for everyone, including their aged and aging. Yet in this rush to their laboratories and factories the problem of human existence, the problem of values, was overlooked, with the result that these societies are afflicted by a new mental disaffection — the people are involved in suicide and divorce as normal facets of living, alongside of alcoholism, juvenile delinquency, and in some cases leading to feverish war preparations. Science and its progeny, technology, have in these instances forgotten the human problem. Man is not a statistical entity to be computed, nor an alphabetic numeral to be put in an equation.

If this is the situation with regard to the senior sciences, their junior partners — the social and human sciences — face a similar



danger of becoming abstracted from their central concern, man. One reason is that the social and human sciences are modelling themselves on the senior sciences using their mathematics, their equations and their configurations as a means of giving vigour to their subject content, forgetting that these tools have only symbolic value in relation to the authentic vocation of the social and human sciences. Whether it be psychology which has not yet understood itself or its subject, man, whom it deals with as an experimental subject, or anthropology with its epistemological impotence, or history with its inexhaustible ambiguity seen in its having its centre everywhere and circumference nowhere, or sociology or economics which are developing a positivism with a view to establishing a science of man without man, they are all heading in the same misdirection. The intellectual area of the human sciences, like that of all science, is man, his intentions, his expressions, and his values. The growing interdisciplinary thrusts which include philosophy which has so far been sidelined, and which has till now isolated itself, are, however, a hopeful renewal of the social and human sciences, involving the metaphysical renewal of the sciences of man and society.

When we turn to art today, we see that it is isolated from other human activities. As we look at our temples and their surrounding gardens and landscape, the sculptures and murals found in them and other historical monuments, we realize that we have left behind the conception of art that they represent—a conception when the masons, geometers, architects, philosophers and sculptors had beauty as their primary objective, doing work that was both true and beautiful, moving, evoking the creation, the human condition, fertility and life. Our universities and schools (and the temples we build today) on the other hand show the state of our art; they exhibit no aesthetic sense and are among the ugliest in the country.

Second, severed from its moorings in beauty, art today has no dominant image and is diverse and dispersed in its coverage, original and esoteric in its meanings, arbitrary and systematic in its expressions, violent and bland in its message, and tending either to contest or to conform to existing values. The result is that art today tends to leave people indifferent and its disarray confuses its votaries. In this situation, art has come to be identified with, and replaced by, the artist, unlike all true art of which the creator is either anonymous or known because of his masterpiece.

Further, even the artists in many cases express only expression. In painting, the object is only a colour or a line;



in poetry, the word is only a sound ; in music the sound is too precise so that noise becomes its substitute. There is no message here of beauty or truth but only of self. Art then becomes meaningless, its only expression being the incomprehensible one that has been made, or badly made or even not made. It is a *how* without a *what*, which means that in the case of acting, there is no purpose beyond the action itself. Its message seems to be "I am, therefore I act," which might mean that "I act, therefore I think" or in the case of the other arts "I am an artist, therefore I make art."

Art through our history has been able to use science and its techniques as seen in the 1,000-leg hall at Sri Ranganatha-swamy temple at Tiruchi, the *gopurams* (ornamented gateways) of the Meenakshi temple at Madurai, the monoliths and the murals and paintings, which used wood, wall coatings, stone, line, and mirror. And what was created was a reflection of their innate concept of beauty embedded in truth. Today's science and technology has produced a large number of new products from plastics to hardened steel and new techniques, industrial and computer based, which enable the artist to try out new instruments, new prints, new sounds and new noises, enabling the architect to plan and build towers of concrete and even aluminium which reach out to the sky, the sculptor to present mobiles, the painter to show as art a bag, a pair of sandals or artificial snow. But in all this art, the notion of beauty is absent as much as is truth. And so while in true art, the person participating was absorbed and was lifted into the world of the true and the beautiful, into a domination of the secular and profane by the sacred and of the real by the surreal, today art causes confusion and puzzlement. Today's art does not arouse even a sense of admiration, leave alone of beauty or truth. Art has become a commercial commodity in this society of consumerism, and a source of big investment, speculation, smuggling and black-marketing.

### Science vs. Art

In this situation, science became divorced from art, and art has come in conflict with science.

The separation starts with science, where the experimental spirit introduced the first doubts concerning the identity and reality of the beautiful and true. From there, the experimental scientific method undermined the sacred spirit and devalued the fables and the myths which traditional art expressed and magnified. And so science came to consider itself as the



only source of truth, the only source of power, the only legitimization of power, and the only means of achieving human happiness. The terms in popular use such as the scientific spirit, scientific evaluation and scientific socialism are expressions of this contradiction, of the belief that beautiful things are neither real nor true, that many real things appear to be strange, unexpected, complicated, bizarre, ugly, and even horrible. Beauty is no longer a criterion of truth. Art and artistic emotion are thought of as being unscientific, of being fake and false. In the so-called industrialized societies, the outstanding success of experimental science joined with belief in reason and rationality has brought a confidence in science as being able by itself, alone, to guide mankind, to reach the true life and attain both happiness and plenty. And so art, which was the tutor of science in many societies, has in the above societies become its servant.

Equally, art in these societies is in rebellion against science. The artist flees from a society where experimental science has decreed that the beautiful is no longer true, that beauty is subjective and all aesthetics deceptive. As a poet, as a man sensing beauty and truth, he runs away from science, which is to him not truth, but a mass of incomprehensible mathematical scribbles which repel him. Yet even as he flees from science, he does not know where he is going, except he has to create, as his vocation is a creative art and an original mandate. In this state of art as being sick of science and turning away from it, the will to do something else leads the artist to break, to upset, to dismember, to smash, or to propose enigmas. Behind him is a new art clientele which has considerable buying power, and which, lacking in the traditional culture of beauty and truth, has opened up a vast new art market which patronizes this art divorced from its tradition. For instance, Picasso is the result not only of the outflow of Picasso, the genius, but also of his commercial success in the art markets of the United States and Europe.

### **Culture as the Renewal of Art and Science**

What then is the means of return to the truth of beauty and the beauty of truth, to the renewal of art and science, so that they are merged once more in our life.

Let us recall that our culture, our aesthetic life, is the product of emotional catharsis along with intellectual illumination. The former is the experience of beauty, the latter brings to us the moment of truth. The two are complementary aspects of an indivisible process. For the experience of beauty to arise there must be the experience of truth which, expressed in today's



computer jargon, would be expressed as beauty being a function of truth and truth a function of beauty. They can be separated by analysis, but in the experience of the creative act they are inseparable. The highest form of human creativity expresses beauty and truth. Both the artist and the scientist are gifted with the faculty of perceiving the events and facts of everyday experience from the angle of the eternal, to express the absolute in human terms and reflect it in a concrete image. Culture and its values are where the infinite, which is beyond the human and is elusive and beyond reach, blends itself with the tangible world of the finite. The scientist's and the artist's aim of associating their existentialist perception with the concrete is expressed in cultural values. By living in the world of beauty and the world of truth, the creative artist and scientist are able to catch an occasional glimpse of eternity looking through the window of time. Whether it is a Vivekananda Rock temple or a Birbal Sahni law of palaeontology, its root is in the end in culture, as Sri Ramakrishna saw it in his song :

“Dive Deep, Dive Deep, O my mind ! Into  
the sea of beauty.  
Make a search in the regions lower, lower  
down under the sea ( for truth ),  
You will come by the jewel, the wealth  
of Prema.”

This renewal and reconciliation of truth-beauty and beauty-truth comes from man's relation to the real and surreal world, that is, to this world which is perceptible to man's senses either directly as in beauty, or through the intermediary of instruments and formulae as in truth on the one hand, and to the world beyond the observed world, which is the non-observed factors, objects, or systems which man must suppose to be real in order to explain the observed real on the other. For us men and women, the observed real is incomplete in the sense that by itself it cannot be understood or make sense until it is related to the surreal — which is the ensemble of our values and beliefs, which makes the real, that is, the observed world, meaningful so that it is bearable and is possibly joyfully lived. Sri Ramakrishna expresses this relation between the real and the surreal in his discourse on the Vedanta thus: “The *Ashtavakra Samhita* deals with the knowledge of the Self. The knowers of the Self declare: “I am He,” that is, “I am that highest Self.” This is the view of Sannyasins ..... but not that of a man of the world. ....The Vedantists hold that the Self has no attachment to anything. Pleasure, pain, virtue, vice, etc., can never affect the Self in any way, but they



do affect men who think their soul is the same as the body; Smoke can blacken only the wall (the real) but not the space (surreal) through which it curls up."

Science thus does not suffice to explain the real because it must admit and evoke a surreal which art imagines and represents. This merging of science and art makes us aware of ourselves and our world of nature and men and enables us to discover the world beyond our senses — the values, which are eternal and the life of the spirit, which is necessary for our intelligence, for our survival and our happiness and our fulfilment, and which led Vivekananda, the chosen disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, to declare :

"Truth is of two kinds: (1) that which is cognizable by the five ordinary senses of man and by reasonings based on them; (2) that which is cognizable by the subtle, supersensuous power of yoga."

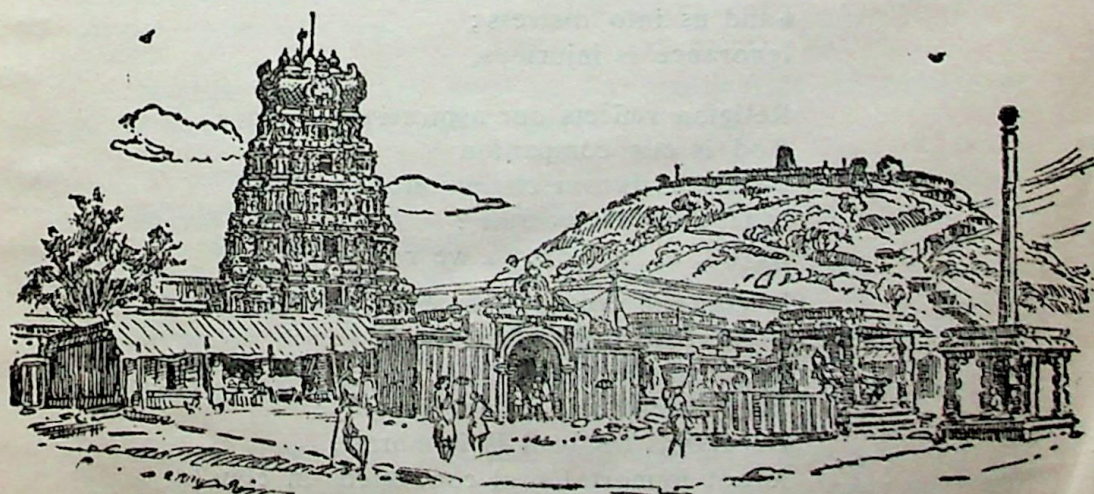
"The greatest name man ever gave to God is Truth. Truth is the fruit of realization; therefore seek it within the soul.....and let your soul see its Self."

I end with quoting one of his favourite *slokas* ( stanzas ) from the *Gita*.

"This Self, weapons cannot pierce, nor fire can burn, water cannot wet, nor air can dry up. Changeless, all-pervading, unmoving, immovable, eternal is this Self of man."

—which to me is the culture where beauty is Truth and Truth beauty.

— Excerpts from the Foundation-Day Oration ( 1983 ) of Sri Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta.





## Is Life Blissful ?

S. A. KHAYUM

God is one, concepts many,  
Globe is one, seasons many,  
Diversity triggers all activity,  
Life is a chain of mobility.

What is animate and what is not  
Is a problem baffled all ;  
What is life and what is not  
Is a riddle never solved.

Existence is the firm reality,  
Life is its conformity,  
Diversity is its quality,  
Death is its mobility.

Monoists called it all in one,  
Dualists differed from them.  
Mystics were mum,  
Philosophers were shaky.

Faith springs from fear,  
Fear from death,  
Death from life,  
Life is from desire.

Love, labour and learning excess  
Land us into distress ;  
Ignorance is injurious.

Religion reflects our aspirations  
God is our companion  
Tradition is our champion  
Is God the Spectator ?  
Result, as we sow, so we reap.

Is man the cream of creation ?  
Is he the crown of nature ?  
Like all others he is  
Born, bread and buried in clay ;  
He claims his soul is immortal,  
Is not immortal soul concealed in clay ?



## WILLIAM HAZLITT

### Greatest of English Essayists and Critics

C. L. R. SASTRI

"Hazlitt compelled a renewal of an old respect: his humanity, his instinct for essentials, his cool detection of pretence and cant, however finely disguised, and his English with its frank love for the embodying noun and the active verb, make reading very like the hard, bright, vigorous weather of the downs when the wind is up Channel. It is bracing,"  
—H. M. Tomlinson (*Old Junk*)

The author of *The Spirit of the Age* was no ordinary man: he was a genius, if ever there was one. Now, that word has lost much of its original force: it has become a sort of rubbed coin. At present there is a general abuse of words. They do not stand singly for an idea, as the late Mr. Edmund Candler has said somewhere, but have become clotted in the mosaic of a formula which may mean anything but which generally does not mean anything at all. They indicate more the absence of thought than the presence of it. Genius is a very rare phenomenon; almost as rare as the flowering of the aloe or the laying of the phoenix's egg.

Hazlitt himself has given us an illuminating description of it in one of his memorable essays:

"Talent differs from genius as voluntary differs from involuntary power.... A clever or ingenious man is one who can do anything well, whether it is worth doing or not; a great man is one who can do that which, when done, is of the greatest importance. Themistocles said he could not play on the flute but that he could make of a small city a great one. This gives us a pretty good idea of the distinction in question." (*Table Talk*: "The Indian Jugglers.")

Try him by what test you will, the man who gave us his invaluable criticisms of Shakespeare's plays and of the



Elizabethan dramatists, who gave us *The Plain Speaker* and *Table Talk* and *Winterslow* and those inimitable personal sketches of some of his distinguished contemporaries that are gathered together in *The Spirit of the Age*, the man who was the friend of Coleridge and Wordsworth and Lamb — he certainly was a genius in the most exalted sense of the term. But we are apt to forget the fact amid the plethora of geniuses that we have amongst us in these fearfully flourishing times. As the late Mr. G. K. Chesterton said beautifully :

“In the beginning of the twentieth century you could not see the ground for clever men. They were so common that a stupid man was quite exceptional.” (*Napoleon of Nottil Hill*)

“Damning him with faint praise”

The first thing, then, that we have to bear in mind in regard to Hazlitt is that he was a writer of rare distinction ; a writer that has almost no parallel in the annals of English prose literature. There are those, of course, who like to belittle him, who grudge him his due, who “damn him with faint praise.”

Hazlitt, certainly, was not a favourite of fortune. He was not born to attract men: his gifts lay rather the other way. He lacked those more delicate charities, those *petites morales*, which, according to Boswell, Dr. Johnson also was deficient in, and the want of which his best friends could not fully justify. He was not one of your polite and smooth-tongued men. In his own day, as well as now ( but to a much smaller extent ), malicious critics have followed him, like bandogs, at his heels, ready to bark if he but deviated ever so slightly from the straight line. Not only have they railed at him openly, but they have tried to injure him in subtler ways. One of these has been the institution of sundry invidious comparisons between him and his dearest friend, Charles Lamb, with, needless to say, everything in favour of Lamb. Now, I am not here concerned with the, doubtless, excruciatingly interesting question as to who, of the two, was the superior writer. There are fashions even in literary sympathies and antipathies, just as there are in trunk-hose and top-hats, and it is positive hardihood on one's part to ignore them and to follow the bent of one's own mind. It is simply asking for trouble.

### Bagehot's Crushing Retort

It is meat and drink to be with those who prefer Lamb to Hazlitt: it is the line of least resistance: it is to swim with the current. There are cults whose creed is the worshipping of Lamb. But the danger in such insensate enthusiasm is that,



however worthy the object of our idolatry may be, we are apt to love, not wisely, but too well. There is a curious instance of the fury that is possible to rise in one's breast by another's holding an opposite opinion. It is well-known that Walter Bagehot — a man who, as the late Mr. Augustine Birrell has remarked somewhere, carried away with him to his grave more originality of thought than anybody else — was an unabashed admirer of Hazlitt and preferred him, as a writer, to Lamb immensely. When that indefatigable literary diarist, Henry Crabb Robinson, heard this he could not control his righteous indignation and began raving like a mad man: "You, Sir, *you* prefer the works of that scoundrel, that odious, that malignant writer, to the exquisite essays of that angelic creature!" Bagehot protested that "there was no evidence that angels could write particularly well." (*Literary Studies: Vol. 3*)

Apart from the question of who, as between the two, was the greater writer this incident gives one an idea of the inexplicable fog of prejudice in which Hazlitt has been enveloped. In fact, the very first difficulty that one encounters in writing of him is this same unmeaning and exasperating prejudice.

### Mixing up the Man and the Writer

Hazlitt the man is too often mixed up with Hazlitt the writer when one is judging the merits of his books. This is, manifestly, unfair. As long as biographies have their vogue, of course, an author's private life cannot, it is obvious, be completely overlooked; but, surely, it ought not to weigh with one overmuch. Moreover, meeting his detractors on their own ground, he was not, let me respectfully suggest, the frightful ogre they uniformly represent him to be. Doubtless, he was not perfect: I may even concede that he was, perhaps, not exactly the kind of man to model one's life upon. We cannot, indeed, go to him for the homely virtues. For that matter, if we turned our scrutinising eye on those around us, we should, I am confident, find hardly a dozen among them who could be said to satisfy the canons as laid down in the *Sermon on the Mount*. Further, we should not have been aware of some of Hazlitt's foibles had he not himself, with disarming candour, revealed them to us: he was his own accuser. He had a fatal predilection for sitting for his own portrait, and the figure that emerges from his canvas is not always a very flattering one: there are too many shadows.

### "Dared to be a Daniel"

The utmost that the Devil's Advocate can say against Hazlitt is that he lacked prudence and foresight. He was



not, in other words, well-versed in the devious ways of the world. He was, however, honest to the backbone and carried independence of thought to a degree that had rarely been attained before nor, probably, ever will be. He was a Radical in politics; and never changed his party or his principles, come what might. As Sir Leslie Stephen has said:

“Among politicians he was a faithful Abdiel when all others had deserted the cause.” — (*Hours in a Library, Vol. II*)

He was so thorough-going, indeed, in his views that he even did not mind, on occasion, sacrificing his best friends for the sake of his opinions. He was an admirer of Napoleon Bonaparte when it was a point of good breeding to hold him in utter detestation. He admired Napoleon so much that, in the end, he wrote a *Life* of him. Whatever his feelings, he expressed them most fearlessly. As he himself has recorded proudly, he had considerable intellectual courage: he

“Dared to be a Daniel  
Dared to stand alone.”

He was one of those who are born to be in a minority and, very often, in a minority of one. But that never made him unhappy. He was thrice fortified as one who knew his cause to be absolutely right. In fact, this was one of his most pleasing traits; and one to which we should give the fullest meed of praise. A thoroughly honest and independent man is born but once in a while and we should, instead of reviling him, regard his arrival as a portent.

#### A Man of Quick Sympathies

Hazlitt was a man of quick sympathies, and it is interesting to learn of the beginnings of his passionate adoration of Napoleon. When Napoleon was a First Consul he was, we are informed, introduced to an officer named “Lovelace.” “Why,” he exclaimed with extraordinary emotion, “that is the name of the man in *Clarissa*!” When Hazlitt heard of this incident he, in Mr. Birrell’s memorable words, “fell in love with Napoleon on the spot and subsequently wrote his *Life* in four volumes.”

There is another instance. Hazlitt relates in his famous essay, “The Fight,” his meeting, at an inn, a tall English yeoman who let fall the observation that to him “Shakespeare, Hogarth and Nature were just enough to know.” He immediately set himself to cultivate that yeoman’s acquaintance. He, certainly, had an eager spirit.



### His First Impulse to Write

Hazlitt was, essentially, a solitary man. In spite of his nomadic way of life and love of conversation he shut himself up within himself; he was self-immersed to the point of morbidity. He was thoughtful from early boyhood. His first readings were in philosophy and metaphysics; and his first writings, too. He set inordinate store by these youthful effusions: he recurred to them often in his essays. But they were the least part of his literary work: I have mentioned them only to indicate the early bent of his mind. Not only was he immensely thoughtful, he thought on his own lines. His mind was untrammelled by what had been said and thought before: he always struck out a path for himself. He was fully justified in saying: "I have written no commonplace, nor a line that licks the dust." As Coleridge wrote to him, "He said things in his own way."

He felt the first impulse to write on coming across Burke's *Letter to a Noble Lord*. For the first time he began to wonder what a fine thing it would be "to be able to convey the slightest conception of my meaning to others in words." He knew the tortures of expression. Though he was an exquisite writer the gift came to him only late in life. If Burke initially led him to appreciate the art of writing, of self-expression, it fell to the lot of Coleridge to encourage him to join the literary brotherhood. Hazlitt describes in his well-known essay, "My First Acquaintance with Poets," his meeting with Coleridge at his father's house, the interest that that great man evinced in him, his being invited to Nether Stowey, and his accompanying Coleridge on his way back for six miles and being held entranced by the poet's endless discourse:

"I would swear that the very milestones had ears, and that Harmer-hill stooped, with all its pines, to listen to a poet as he passed."

### Coleridge

In his writings, it will be noticed, Hazlitt often refers to Coleridge—even where there would appear to be no readily ascertainable reason for it—but with ever-diminishing enthusiasm: the hero-worshipper had gradually given place to the stern and unbending critic. After enumerating Coleridge's innumerable gifts in a characteristically eloquent passage in his portrait of him in *The Spirit of the Age* he ends thus:

"Alas! 'Frailty, thy name is *Genius*!' What has become of all this mighty heap of hope, of thought, of learning and humanity? It has ended in swallowing doses of oblivion and in writing paragraphs in the *Courier*...Such and so little is the mind of man!"



### A Conservative in his Literary Tastes

Hazlitt was no book-worm: to him reading was not an end in itself: he had no vanity of knowledge. He read few books — and those of old authors; and to these he returned again and again. He did not care for contemporary literature. With the exception of Sir Walter Scott he did not allow new writers a place on his shelves. He was as conservative in his literary tastes as he was radical in politics. He says somewhere: "Women judge of books as they do of fashions or complexions which are admired only 'in their newest gloss'." In his essay, "On Reading Old Books," he offers a reason for his antipathy to new authors:

"I hate to read new books ..... Contemporary writers may generally be divided into two classes — one's friends or one's foes. Of the first we are compelled to think too well, and of the last we are disposed to think too ill, to receive much genuine pleasure from the perusal or to judge fairly of the merits of either. One candidate for literary fame who happens to be our acquaintance writes finely and like a man of genius, but unfortunately has a foolish face, which spoils a delicate passage; and another inspires us with the highest respect for his personal talents and character, but does not come up to our expectations in print. All these contradictions and petty details interrupt the calm current of our reflections."

(*The Plain Speaker*)

### On Sir Walter Scott

Hazlitt made an exception, as I have hinted, in the case of Sir Walter Scott. He simply revelled in his novels. He, indeed, had no exaggerated notions of Scott's intrinsic genius: in fact, he was reluctant to concede him the title of an original thinker: he regarded him only as an unsurpassed and unsurpassable collector and compiler of interesting facts, as a sort of "human documentarian", if I may coin a phrase. He had an unerring eye for essentials and often hit the bull's eye in his criticisms. He summed up Scott's merits as follows:

"His (Scott's) worst is better than any other person's best ..... His works taken together are almost like a new edition of human nature. This is, indeed, to be an author!" (*The Spirit of the Age*)

Hazlitt tried his hand at painting in his early days and spent much time at his brother's studio. He dabbled in the art for a few years but (the fates intervening) gave it up later for the more arduous profession of letters. It was not that he did not do moderately well in it: he had, however, the wit to recognise that he was not born to wield the brush but to ply the pen. But that early love never altogether forsook him and he turned his



knowledge of painting to literary ends. A not inconsiderable body of his writings is devoted to the criticism of pictures. He wrote like one that knew what was going on behind the scenes. Among painters Titian occupied the foremost place in his heart; and one comes across his name frequently in his books.

### One of the Earliest of Dramatic Critics

Hazlitt was one of the earliest of dramatic critics. He loved play-going and loved more the writing upon it. He has given us unforgettable descriptions of some of the finest actors of his day: he has pointed out, with remarkable penetration, their respective merits and defects. This is on Edmund Kean: "He treads close upon the genius of his author (Shakespeare)." In his beautiful essay, "On Actors and Acting," he shows us the nobility of the profession and attacks those who spoke of it disdainfully: "Players are only not so respectable as they might be because their profession is not respected as it ought to be." This essay is one of his very best. This one and "On Going a Journey" and "The Fight" and "My First Acquaintance with Poets" and "The Feeling of Immortality in Youth" and "The Indian Jugglers" would have been quite sufficient, in my opinion, to ensure his fame even if he had not written anything else. It is in speaking of the second of these essays that Stevenson was moved to declare: "We are mighty fine fellows but we cannot write like William Hazlitt." In fact, Stevenson was so enamoured of Hazlitt's writings that he once nearly decided to write his biography; but, as ill-luck would have it, he was deterred (at the last minute, so to speak) by a perusal of the latter's *Libor Amoris*. His omission thus to write is, I have no hesitation in saying, one of the major misfortunes of English literature, besides, of course, being an unmerited disaster to Hazlitt himself. Hazlitt has been uniformly unfortunate in his biographers with the exception of the most recent of them, Mr. P. Howe, in mentioning whose name in the context of our immortal author we shall not be honouring it so much.

"As giving it a hope that there  
It could not wither'd be."

If Stevenson had not, on such a flimsy ground, fought shy of the experiment we should have had not only the best but the most sympathetic biography of Hazlitt that has up to now been written — again excepting Mr. P. P. Howe's.

### Hazlitt's Shakespearean Criticism

Hazlitt's Shakespearean criticisms are, perhaps, the finest of their kind. Nor am I to be understood as forgetting the august



name of Coleridge in this connection. I, here and now, disclaim any wish to take sides in the matter. It is possible that Coleridge's Shakespearean criticism is, taken as a whole, much the profounder of the two. In amplitude of mind Coleridge, among English critics, takes the cake. The co-author of the *Lyrical Ballads* was a philosopher and a metaphysician of no mean calibre; nor was he, in his literary criticisms, appreciably less of either. Hazlitt also, as I have noted earlier, was both a philosopher and a metaphysician in his early days and like his own Indian jugglers, loved to toss a multiplicity of dialectical balls into the air without falling to catch them again on their downward journey. But when he took to literature he took care to be strictly literary; and it may well be that to this parting of the ways must be attributed the absence in his Shakespearean criticisms of those grand sweeps and lofty circlings that characterise the movement of Coleridge's mind with respect to the same. In retrospect it seems to me that Hazlitt made a wise choice in that he was enabled thereby to escape the danger of being exasperatingly woolly on occasion in the manner of his eminent friend and colleague. Hazlitt had the twin virtues of knowing his own mind definitely on any subject and of communicating it to his readers in the most unambiguous form possible. Unlike Coleridge he did not "gyre and gimble in the wabe." His literary criticism might thus have been deficient in the virtues of what I may call the Higher Moonshine. It made up for that deficiency, however, by having its feet firmly planted on the solid ground. If it did not ascend too high to the empyrean it did not descend too low into the nether regions either. It is my firm conviction that, taking it by and large, Hazlitt has no reason to hang his head down in shame before the name and fame of his one-time mentor. In Shakespearean criticism he has (let it be said without any beating about the bush) the honour of holding it as high as, if not higher than, the latter.

### Specimens

Of Hamlet he writes:

"Hamlet is a name; his speeches and sayings but the idle coinage of the poet's brain. What, then, are they not real? They are as real as our own thoughts. Their reality is in the reader's mind. It is we who are Hamlet."

He says of Romeo: "Romeo is Hamlet in love." In speaking of Shakespeare's insight into Nature he writes:

"Other dramatic writers give us very fine versions and paraphrases of Nature; but Shakespeare, together with his own comments, gives us the original text that we may judge for ourselves."



Can the following passage on Falstaff be bettered?

"This is perhaps the most substantial comic character that ever was invented. Sir John carries a most portly presence in the mind's eye; and in him, not to speak of it profanely, "we behold the fullness of the spirit of wit and humour bodily." We are as well acquainted with his person as with his mind, and his jokes come upon us with double force and relish from the quantity of flesh through which they make their way as he shakes his fat sides with laughter, or "lards the lean earth as he walks along." Other comic characters seem, if we approach and handle them, to resolve themselves into air, "into thin air"; but this is embodied and palpable to the grossest apprehension; it lies "three fingers deep upon the ribs," it plays about the lungs and the diaphragm with all the force of animal enjoyment. His body is like a good estate to his mind, from which he receives rents and revenues of profit and pleasure in kind, according to its extent, and the richness of the soil. Wit is often a meagre substitute for pleasurable sensation; an effusion of spleen and petty spite at the comforts of others, from feeling none in itself. Falstaff's wit is an emanation of a fine constitution; an exuberance of good humour and good nature; an overflowing of his love of laughter and good fellowship; a giving vent to his heart's ease, and over-contentment with himself and others." (*Characters of Shakespeare's plays*; "Henry IV")

His entire essay on Falstaff merits quotation, but I shall stop here. Nor is a passage of this superlative excellence a mere flash in the pan, an isolated affair. Hazlitt's writings, no less than (according to himself) Falstaff's jokes, have a "cut and come again" quality about them.

#### His "gusto"

Hazlitt's works are thickly strewn with quotations from Shakespeare. When dissertating on Hazlitt's critical acumen we shall do well to remember that he had no formal training of any kind, that he was his own guide in the intricate paths of literature, that, in short, whatever his views, he spun them, spiderlike, entirely out of himself. He was indebted to no one, living or dead, for them. His thoughts were his own and bore the impress of strong originality.

"This phenix built the phoenix's nest,  
His architecture was his own."

In his literary criticism he did not so much instruct his readers as guide them along what he considered were wholesome channels. He pointed out the choicest passages of each of his authors and contrived to kindle his own enthusiasm in the breasts of his readers or hearers. He was, broadly speaking, a much more reliable teacher than many so-called professors of literature. He was never dry or uninteresting. As the late Mr. Charles Whibley wrote



of him: "He read with the taste of the connoisseur and he wrote with the fury of the enthusiast." The chief quality of his writings is "gusto". He had an instinctive love for literature—he lived and moved and had his being in it. He read his favourite authors as lovers scan the faces of their beloveds. He was so in all matters. Whatever he took to, he took to it with his whole heart and soul, he did not believe in half measures. With all his fervent love for books, however, he was not that nauseating creature—a pedant. He bustled about the world as much as anyone else; and (very properly) he interpreted the books he read in the light of the facts of life, or as many of them as he managed to grasp. Literature was to him a relaxation, not a toil; and anything is a relaxation that "comes home to the bosoms and businesses of men." As Professor Oliver Elton says:

"Literature gives him perhaps the least alloyed element of his happiness, and good words are like a glass of wine to him."

As for the weight of his criticisms he proceeds:

"By the time he has done them (that is, his *Lectures on the English Poets* at the Surrey institution in 1818) he has managed to present a body of critical writings more than equal in mass to all that has been saved from the pens of Lamb and Coleridge put together; more panoramic on range, and more connected in view, and, at its best, as rare and revealing in its own fashion as theirs."

*A Survey of English Literature, Vol. II*

In the opinion of another eminent judge, the late Professor George Saintsbury:

"You get such appreciation in the best, the most delightful, the most *valuable* sense, as had been seldom seen since Dryden, never before, and in him not frequently. *I do not know in what language to look for a parallel wealth.*" (My italics) *A History of Criticism and Taste, Vol. III*)

### As an Essayist

It is as an essayist, however, that Hazlitt is popularly known. He wrote about a hundred essays in all; and I can affirm that not one of these is dull. There may, sometimes, be no system or method in them; but it is my conviction that system or method would have been their undoing. There are some writers who cannot, if only to save their souls, write to order: ideas come to them *impromptu* and not according to any previous arrangement. Nothing, indeed, gives them greater delight than defying rules. Not a few of the very greatest writers have trusted to inspiration rather than to premeditation; and though that way of setting about the business may not be wholesome from a



theoretical point of view, it cannot be gainsaid that it often works well in practice. It is not that they are lacking in the power of cerebration; there is, not seldom, a larger amount of it in their writings than in those of the more methodical essayists. The important consideration, surely, is not whether one has meticulously thought out one's line of procedure beforehand, but whether, when the whole essay is finished, it is eminently readable; that is all that any of us has a right to ask of a writer. Nobody judges an actor by going into the greenroom and examining the devices of his "make up", we judge him after he has come before the footlights and by the manner of his acting. The same is true of the essayist. It is the cumulative result that we want and not the various steps by which the thing has been accomplished. Hazlitt, then, lacked system. In one of his essays he has himself confessed:

"After I begin them (the essays, that is) I am only anxious to get to the end of them, which I am not sure I shall do, for I seldom see my way a page or even a sentence beforehand; and when I have, as by a miracle, escaped, I trouble myself little more about them."

### A Born Writer

In spite of this, however, Hazlitt was a born writer. He could write on anything and could write that marvellously well. It was with him no matter what he wrote — it was at once imbued with a form of its own and was stamped with the unmistakable mark of genius. Writing came naturally to him and the subject was only of secondary importance; sometimes, it must be conceded, the subsidiary swallows up the primary and the captain's luggage all but sinks the ship and cargo. But the thing works well in his hands and his essays give unending delight. In a phrase immortalised by Charles Lamb, they belong to the class of "perpetually self-reproductive volumes — Great Nature's Stereotypes."

### His Style

I must now discuss the question of his style. De Quincey, it is well-known, could not abide it; being at the opposite pole to his own it gave him, we may conjecture, a pain on the neck. But, before coming to the Opium Eater's view of Hazlitt's style, let me remind my readers of what our one and only "G. K. C." deemed it fit to say of De Quincey's own sentences. Chesterton described them in the happy phrase that "They lengthen out like nightmare corridors or rise higher and higher like impossible eastern pagodas."

(*The Victorian Age in Literature.*)

By an irony of fate it fell to the lot of this same perverse stylist to fall foul of Hazlitt's unexceptionable mode of writing.



He condemned it as being "discontinuous," and his thoughts as being "abrupt, insulated, capricious and non-sequacious." He continued:

"Hazlitt's brilliancy is seen chiefly in separate splinterings of phrase or image which throw upon the eye a vitreous scintillation for a moment, but spread no deep suffusion of colour and distribute no masses of mighty shadow. A flash, a solitary flash, and all is gone."

I suppose this rhodomontade means something, though, for the moment, it passes such comprehension as the Almighty has bestowed upon me. The fact, however, is that De Quincey was never known to have been guilty of giving anyone credit for writing well excepting Jeremy Taylor and Sir Thomas Browne and — well, not to put too fine a point upon it, himself. It was almost an obsession with him that his own style was the finest in the heavens above, the earth below, and the waters underneath the earth, and that all others must, perforce, write badly: his geese were all swans while other writers' swans were, inevitably, apt to be only geese. I do not pretend to be able to analyse Hazlitt's style too minutely. But I venture to assert that it was as perfect a prose style as ever was written: at its very best it was nothing short of being superb. As Prof. Elton puts it:

"Hazlitt is in the ranks of the classic English writers whom he knows well. He has read Bacon and Dryden and Earle and Addison and has got something from most of them; for one thing, his manly strength and remarkably undefiled purity of diction, which cannot well be described, for it is not strange or mannered, and for this reason defies parody. It is good to go to school to him for vocabulary and idiom; the great distillers of language, the Elizabethan re-incarnate, like Charles Lamb, may produce something more rare and wonderful, but they are not such good models. *Hazlitt simply uses right English, and the only way to profit by him is to do the same.*" (My italics.) *A Survey of the English Literature* — Vol. II.

### Henley on Hazlitt

Hazlitt is fond of simple but forceful sentences where every word tells. He is fond of variation. At the end of a couple of sentences we may remain at the same point of thought but, with each sentence, the sense of it is brought home to us in ever-increasing measure and at the end of them all, we are left in no doubt whatever of the author's meaning. He is fond of images; and he flings them at our heads one after another without the least betrayal of effort. Quotations abound; sometimes in the most unexpected places. He applies them in his own fashion. Nor does he mind repeating them as often as the fancy takes him. After reading him for a while we become as familiar with them as he himself.



We can know the man from his writings. There is an unmistakable ring of sincerity in his words. He *feels* every syllable he writes and makes us feel, too. He plunges unto his subject headlong; and every word that he utters is a blow aimed at the heart. Further, he indulges in astonishing comparisons. This is how, for instance, he chooses to describe the play of Cavanagh, the famous fives' player:

"His blows were not undecided and ineffectual, lumbering like Mr. Wordsworth's epic poetry, nor wavering like Mr. Coleridge's lyric prose, nor short of the mark like Mr. Brougham's speeches, nor wide of it like Mr. Canning's wit, nor foul like the *Quarterly*, nor let balls like the *Edinburgh Review*. Cobbet and Junius together would have made a Cavanagh." ( *Table Talk* : "The Indian Jugglers." )

Was ever a player described like this before? No wonder W. E. Henley was impelled to conclude his celebrated essay on Hazlitt with the ever-memorable sentence: "Hazlitt is ever Hazlitt; and at his highest moments Hazlitt is hard to beat and has not these many years been beaten."

## Desires

R. SUNDARESAN

Axling or spearing  
 desires  
 is self-deceiving;  
 the spark of life  
 still glows in them;  
 like a hydra's  
 their severed heads grow;  
 I have thought many a time  
 this was the final murder  
 and desires  
 would no more stir  
 the pool of peace  
 and when in a limousine  
 the factory owner speeds fast,  
 his alsatian craning out,  
 I am the same, old dreamy man.



## Scientific and Humanistic Cultures

PURASU BALAKRISHNAN

### The Question

The terms "scientific culture" and "humanistic culture" reflect at once the dichotomy of culture, of which there should be only one. In a sense, this dichotomy reflects the essential human predicament, the limitation of the human mind. It is no wonder that this great divide has been noticed and debated since the dawn of civilization, from the time of Plato and the *vedic* seers to the present day. The two latest protagonists in the field are C. P. Snow and F. R. Leavis.

Sir Charles Snow, who entered the field with his Rede lecture, *The two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*, delivered at Cambridge University in 1959, at once queered the pitch of the debate that followed, by the air of scientific superiority and literary authority that he assumed, and in Leavis's words, by the utter lack of intellectual distinction and an embarrassing vulgarity of style, by unsupported clichés, void of any glimmer of what creative literature is or why it matters. The Leavis-Snow controversy was continued by Lionel Trilling (in *Commentary*, June 1962), Robert Oppenheimer (in *Encounter*, October 1962), Aldous Huxley (in *Literature and Science*, Chatto and Windus) and by many others.

It is true that Snow did not discuss the central problem of values implicit in what he called the "two cultures." As Michael Yudkin remarks, "Curiously enough he (Snow) is more concerned with the number two than the term 'culture'." Dr. Leavis, in his Richmond lecture, delivered at Cambridge University in 1962 from which I have already given sample, sthundered, "He (Snow) doesn't know what he means, and doesn't know he doesn't know." After the acrimonious controversy that followed, Snow offered an apologia *The Two Cultures: A Second Look* in 1964. This was by no means an improvement on the first look.



Snow or Leavis? That is the question. Which of the two cultures of Snow's concept? Scientism or literarism? The truth is, as Aldous Huxley remarks, scientism is a disservice to science, and literarism to literature. Which to choose? We are reminded of the deliberation of our *rishis* of the *Rig-veda* (X, 121) more than three thousand years ago, "To which god shall we give our adoration?" — "*kasmai devaaya havisha vidhema*", this question occurring as a refrain eight times in the hymn.

### Historical Perspective — India

Going back to get a historical perspective of this ancient conflict between the two cultures, we come upon the same disturbing number two of Snow's two cultures, two thousand and five hundred years ago in the *Upanishads*, not in the framework of culture but in that of knowledge—*para-vidya* or the higher knowledge pertaining to the Supreme Brahman, and *apara-vidya* or the lower knowledge pertaining to the phenomenal world.

The *Mundakopanishad* describes Saunaka, a righteous householder, approaching the sage Angirasa with the question, "Sir, what is that, by knowing which all else is known? (*Kasminnu bhagavo vijnaate sarvamidam vijnaatam bhuvati*). To him sage Angirasa replies, "Two kinds of knowledge are to be known, as those who have known Brahman say — the higher knowledge and the lower" (*dve vidye veditavya iti ha sma brahmavido vadanti paraa chaiva aparaa cha*). Explaining this, sage Angirasa continues, "Of these, the lower knowledge comprises *Rig-veda*, *Yajur-veda*, *Sama-veda*, *Atharva-veda*—phonetics, rituals, grammar, etymology, prosody and astrology. The higher knowledge is that by which the Immutable is known, namely *Brahma-vidya*. "*Tatraaparaa rigvedo yajurvedah samavedo atharvavedah siksha kalpo vyakaranam niruktam chando jyotisham iti, ata aparaa yayaa tadaksharam adhigamyate.*") The same is expressed again in *Amrutabindoopanishad*: "Two kinds of knowledge are to be acquired." These Vedic utterances, although pertaining to the *Brahman*, are not so far removed as it may appear, from the context of Snow's two cultures, if we remember that one culture of Snow may appropriately be represented by poetry, and that the poet is allied to the seer, that the imaginative faculty may be the other side of religious prophecy, that the essence of religious expression is poetry. We may also recall the words of Wordsworth who declared that "poetry is most just to its divine origin when it administers the comforts and breathes the thoughts of religion."



Since I shall not revert to the two knowledges of the *vedic* concept, I may round off this theme here by saying that the attitude of Hinduism is such that it admits the propriety of everything at its own level and in its own time. The aim of Hinduism is to make one steadily less and less imperfect in life, until hopefully one may pass beyond imperfection altogether. Hinduism permits, in fact enjoins on the individual to involve himself in the living values of life, comprising *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*, namely personal fulfilment and social values, until the last stage of life or *sanyasa* (that is, retirement / renunciation) when he is to seek *moksha* or liberation, pondering on the ultimate questions of life, "Who am I? What is this life for?" and the like. Even in the context of the Snow controversy, this attitude of readiness, leading to ripeness will itself be a help to the solution of the problem.

### Historical Perspective — Europe

To return to the world of Snow and Leavis — to the main-springs of European thought :

Plato (427 - 347 B. C.) in his *Republic* cryptically remarks, "Poets utter great and wise things which they do not understand", and banned them from his ideal community. Will Durant observes that while Plato inveighs against poets and their myths, he himself adds one to the number of poets and hundreds to the number of myths. In respect of the humanities Plato assigned a high place in his curriculum to music, in order to make the soul graceful, as he put it. He gave a high place also to athletics and gymnastics for the cultivation of health. He considered mathematics to be the father of philosophy. Over the door of his Academy he placed the words, "Let no man ignorant of geometry enter here."

Aristotle's School (384 - 322 B. C.), the Lyceum, was oriented differently from Plato's Academy. It leaned towards biology and the natural science, while Plato's had stressed mathematics and philosophy. Without the literary brilliance of Plato, as Will Durant observes, Aristotle showed a greater understanding of poetry. He took poetry and the arts seriously. He enunciated that the function of art is catharsis or purification, that tragedy "through pity or fear effects the proper purgation of the emotions" which accumulate under the pressure of social restraints and may turn unsocial and destructive, that the noblest art gives an intellectual pleasure, appealing to the intellect as well as to the feelings.

The legacy of Greece passed to Rome and thence to Europe. Until the Renaissance (14th century A. D.), by reason of chronological propinquity, Latin prevailed in Europe. All higher



knowledge had to be acquired in that language. Thus started the liberal arts tradition of medieval Europe. It consisted of two parts. The first part, the *trivium* consisted of grammar, rhetoric and logic. The second part, the *quadrivium*, consisted of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music restricted to its mathematical basis.

During the Renaissance (14 - 16 centuries A. D.) Latin ceased to be the sole key to knowledge. The study of Greek came into its own as an essential part of higher education. Subsequently instruction in the modern literatures of England, France and Germany gradually supplanted the ancient classical literatures. Physical science was practically ignored.

The seventeenth century ushered the scientific instruments of revelation like the telescope and the microscope. Experiments with these, revealing new worlds, the very big and the very small, were productive of an experience so that the ideas of "experiment" and "experience" came to be associated in people's minds.

However, in the eighteenth century, as science forged ahead with the scrutiny of things invisible, intangible, or likewise not lending themselves to experience, "experiment" and "experience" came to be differentiated from each other. "Experiment" denoted precise procedures that led to factual or quantitative information. "Experience" indicated a subjective inner knowledge beyond the pale of what the Royal Society concretized as "positive" knowledge. The poet Keats, out of the exuberance of his poetic intuition, casually coined the challenging counter-phrase "negative capability" as the mark of the poet, without any idea of entering into the fray, or even possibly without any knowledge of the fray. Keats declared, "He (the poet) has no identity; he is continually in for, and filling some other body." Negative capability is an openness to experience which obliterates personality.

The nineteenth century was preoccupied with these two different kinds of knowledge. Wordsworth and Coleridge were the prophets of poetic experience. An experience was not to be acquired in the manner of the extraneous positive knowledge of science; a personal involvement or relationship to the knowledge was required for experience. An experiment was impersonal, a thing outside of the experimenter's personality. It was cumulative in respect of knowledge. In experiment the field of knowledge grows. In experience the knowing person grows. Wordsworth's poem *The Prelude* was fittingly sub-titled *Growth of a Poet's Mind*. In matters of experience, knowing is becoming. The *Mundakopanishad*



says that knowing Brahman is becoming Brahman: *sa yo ha vai tat paramam brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati*. Coleridge, in his *Biographia Literaria*, says, "The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings out the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity." The use of the word "soul" in this description of the poet's office is noteworthy.

Thus the words "experiment" and "experience" became a polar pair, analogous to the two cultures of Snow's concept.

### Historical Perspective — The Modern Period

The modern debate between science and arts, as also between science and religion, started with the great Victorians early in the last century when science was getting to be recognized as indispensable in general education. It found a great crusader in Thomas Henry Huxley, biologist and paleontologist, who had also a broad liberal background. On one occasion he shared a platform with Bishop Wilberforce, a classicist, in what has been called the most famous debate over a theory of modern science. It was in 1860, the year following the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*. The bishop, attacking the theory of evolution, ended his talk by flourishing a question at Huxley whether he (Huxley) counted his descent from the ape on his father's or his mother's side. Huxley's crushing reply is recounted by him in a letter as follows: "If then, said I, the question is put to me would I rather have a miserable ape for a grand-father, or a man highly endowed by nature and possessing great means and influence, and yet who employs those faculties and that influence for the mere purpose of introducing ridicule into a grave scientific discussion — I unhesitatingly affirm my preference for the ape."

In 1880 this formidable debater, delivering the inaugural address at the opening of Sir Josiah Mason's College in Birmingham (later to become the University of Birmingham) made his celebrated and controversial attack on the neglect of science in education. Sir Josiah Mason had specified the policy of his college as excluding party politics and theology from its precincts, and also as not providing "mere literary instruction and education." Taking the cue from the last, Huxley launched an attack on classical education, tilting lances with Matthew Arnold, poet and apostle of "sweetness and light." Huxley described classical scholars as Levites in charge of the ark of culture. He declared:

I hold very strongly by two convictions the first is that neither the discipline nor the subject matter of classical



education is of such direct value to the student of physical science as to justify the expenditure of valuable time on either; and the second is that, for the purpose of attaining real culture, an exclusively scientific education is at least as effectual as an exclusively literary education...Nevertheless I am the last person to question the importance of genuine literary education, or to suppose that intellectual culture can be complete without it...French and German, and especially the latter language, are absolutely indispensable to those who desire full knowledge in any department of science. But even supposing that the knowledge of these languages acquired is not more than sufficient for purely scientific purposes, every Englishman has, in his native tongue, an almost perfect instrument of literary expression; and in his own literature, models of every kind of literary excellence. If an Englishman cannot get literary culture out of his Bible, his Shakespeare, his Milton, neither in my belief, will the profoundest study of Homer and Sophocles, Virgil and Horace, give it to him.

Referring to Matthew Arnold's two propositions that criticism of life is the essence of culture and that literature contains the materials which suffice for such a criticism, Huxley declared:

I think we must all assent to the first proposition... and yet strongly dissent from the assumption that literature alone is competent to supply this knowledge.

I think we today will agree with Huxley essentially, but with the reservation that he overstated his case. We may go with him to the extent that an exclusively scientific education may, in its highest reaches, impart real culture, but we will also hold that science cannot usurp the place of literature in the criticism of life.

#### **Sir Charles Snow**

Since Huxley's time the gap between men of science and men of letters seems to have widened. Sir Charles Snow, in his Rede Lecture of 1959, warned that there might be a total divorce between the two groups. He declared:

The two cultures were already dangerously separate sixty years ago... None of that degree of interchange (as was in vogue at that time) at the top of the Establishment is likely, or indeed thinkable now... In fact, the separation between scientists and non-scientists is much less bridgeable among the young than it was even thirty years ago. Thirty years ago, the cultures had long ceased to speak to each other; but at least they managed a kind of frozen smile across the gulf. Now the politeness has gone, and they just make faces.

Rival factions ran in hot pursuit of the ghost of alarm that he raised since the situation concerned the nation's power-structure.



Snow stated his thesis as follows :

I believe the intellectual life of the whole of western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups. At one pole we have the literary intellectuals ... at the other, scientists, and as the most representative, the physical scientists. Between the two a gulf of mutual incomprehension—sometimes ( particularly among the young ) hostility and dislike but most of all, lack of understanding ... The non-scientists have a rooted impression that the scientists are shallowly optimistic, unaware of man's condition. On the other hand, the scientists believe that the literary intellectuals are totally lacking in foresight, peculiarly unconcerned with their brother men, in a deep sense anti-intellectual, anxious to restrict both art and thought to the existential moment.

Apropos of this, T. R. Henn remarks, " I cannot find any meaning in the phrase 'the existential moment'."

Labouring to show that scientists have their own culture, Snow makes the following pronouncements in a style that shows the man :

At one pole, the scientific culture really is a culture, not only in an intellectual but also in an anthropological sense. ... They have their own culture, intensive, rigorous, and constantly in action. Their culture contains a great deal of argument, usually much more rigorous and almost always at a higher conceptual level than literary person's arguments—even though the scientists do cheerfully use words in senses which literary persons don't recognize...

...They ( the scientists ) have the future in their bones ...

... Intellectuals, particularly literary intellectuals, are natural Luddites ...

... In the moral ( life ) they ( the scientists ) are, by and large, the soundest group of intellectuals we have.

Snow relates that in his experience many scientists find Dickens unintelligible and that almost all non-scientists are unable to define mass or acceleration—comparative accounting as droll as the *Picwickian* sense. To quote Leavis, " He (Snow) enforces his intention by telling us, after reporting the failure of his literary friends to describe the second law of Thermodynamics, ' Yet I was asking them something which is about the equivalent of *Have you read a work of Shakespeare?* ' ' There is no scientific equivalent to that question, ' says Leavis. ' Equations between orders so disparate are meaningless'."

Snow bewails further :

They ( the literary intellectuals ) still like to pretend that the traditional culture is the whole of culture as though the natural order did not exist...Most non-scientists have no



conception of that (the scientific) edifice at all. Even if they want to have it, they can't. It is rather as though, over an immense range of intellectual experience, a whole group was tone-deaf. Except that this tone-deafness does not come by nature, but by training, or rather the absence of training.

Sir Charles Snow has here unwittingly used the word *experience* in the purpose "intellectual experience" which, if he had paused over it, should have given him light. Intellectual *experience* is the essence, factual information *per se* has no value. It is no use carrying loads of learned lumber in one's head. The brain, as Sherlock Holmes explained to Dr. Watson is a vessel of limited content, and one has to know what one stuffs it with, so that one may take care that one stuffs it with things which will be useful to one by way of giving either information or intellectual pleasure.

This leads us further to the examination of Snow's concept of two cultures. As Michael Yudkin remarks, "There are, regrettably, dozens of cultures, in Sir Charles's use of the term, even if the gap between the scientist and the non-scientist is probably the widest ... By concentrating attention on the gap between scientific and non-scientific intellectual effort, he bypasses the many gaps within each culture ... Do those members of the traditional culture, who do not specifically study literature or music or the fine arts enrich themselves by contact with them? Do they not, like the scientist, believe works of art to be irrelevant to their interests?... If Snow, the writer, can so easily dismiss Yeats, Pound and Lewis, Snow, the scientist, exhibits a limitation, no less remarkable. For him, science includes only the physical sciences. But where are the biologists, the biochemists and the physiologists? ... For a non-scientist, an understanding of science rests not on the acquisition of scientific knowledge but on scientific habits of thought and method."

#### Dr. F. R. Leavis

After Snow, Leavis. As Snow's Rede Lecture of 1959 was filtering into schools and was being studied "earnestly" in sixth forms, Dr. Leavis felt that it was time to counteract the damage done by it. His Richmond Lecture of 1962 entitled *Two Cultures?*, *The Significance of C. P. Snow* was an attack on Snow's thesis, unsparing and trenchant, if angry and ill-mannered. It was like Macaulay's exposure of Robert Montgomery's poems when they were beginning to be classed with Milton's. Macaulay, however, was relatively urbane, though equally ruthless, in his work of demolition. Nevertheless one feels that Dr. Leavis goes to the



root of the matter when he says that there is no equivalent to a play of Shakespeare in science, that artistic experience cannot be equated with scientific finding, and when further he says, "In coming to terms with great literature we discover what at bottom we really believe. What for—what ultimately for? What do men live by?—the questions work and tell at what I can only call a religious depth of thought and feeling." This enunciation of Dr. Leavis is significant. In this I would particularly draw attention to the word *religious* which has, as it were, insensibly slipped into the vocabulary of the purely literary man that Leavis was. And thus is literature linked to religion and philosophy, rendering them in human terms. Lest I be misunderstood, I hasten to add that the poet (in the words of Jacques Maritain) has his own way, which is neither scientific nor philosophical, of knowing the world, and that the man of letters is kindred to the poet. "The poet is a man speaking to men," said Wordsworth in very simple terms. These few words mark at once the distinction between literature and science.

## Encountering Death

Dr. J. BHAGYALAKSHMI

When death stares you in the eye  
 Making you freeze,  
 Seized with fright  
 A numbness  
 Spreading all over,  
 What do you do?  
 You feel so humble  
 You feel so small  
 Helpless and trembling  
 Before that might  
 You think of them whom you love  
 You clasp them close  
 Tighten your fold  
 Your thoughts whisper  
 Frightful truths  
 You hush them up  
 Lest the death should hear  
 And snatch away the ones you love.



## Tragic Potentialities of Bhavabhuti

Dr. A. N. BANERJEA

*Head of the Sanskrit Department, University of Gorakhpur*

In the galaxy of the classical Sanskrit dramatists the two brightest stars are undoubtedly Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti. While Kalidasa excels in the depiction of the sentiment of love, Bhavabhuti, expounding the philosophy of love, is according to some, unrivalled in the treatment of tender feelings and pathos. The traditional verdicts of the Sanskrit critics, e. g., कारुण्यं भवभूतिरेव तनुते and उत्तरे रामचरिते भवभूति विशिष्यते confirm on the one hand Bhavabhuti's supremacy in depicting the sentiment of pathos (*karuna-rasa*) and on the other establish beyond doubt that the "Uttararamacharitam", which is held by all to be Bhavabhuti's masterpiece, excels all dramatic compositions on account of the exhibition of genuine pathos. In the words of Macdonell, the description of the tender love of Rama and Sita purified by sorrow exhibits more genuine pathos than appears in any other Indian drama.

Govardhanacharya in the *Aryasaptasati* goes to the extent of saying that the poetic muse of Bhavabhuti assumes the form of a hilly tract — how else in the creation of pathos would the stone cry?

भवभूतेः सम्बन्धाद् भूधरभूखे भारती भाति ।

एतत्कृतकारुण्ये किमन्यथा रौदिति ग्रावा ॥

apparently referring to the famous verse of the "Uttararamacharitam" जनस्थाने शून्ये विकलकरणैरार्यचरितैरपि ग्रावा रौदित्यपि दलति वज्रस्य हृदयम् ।

It would be necessary to analyse the situations and the feelings of the characters presented by Bhavabhuti in his dramas in order to assess the competence of the great dramatist in describing in an inimitable manner the pathetic or the tragic *Rasa*. It is well-known that the extant works ascribed to Bhavabhuti are only a



three—the *Malatimadhavam*, the *Mahaviracharitam* and the *Uttaramacharitam*. While the first is a fictitious romantic love-story of the middle-class life and purely invented by the great dramatist, the last two are based on the earlier and later parts of the story of Rama as depicted in the *Ramayana*. It would be futile indeed to find evidence of the poet-dramatist's capabilities to suggest the tragic element or sentiment in the *Prakarana* where the love of separated lovers (*vipralambhasringara*) is depicted and that too, not in a manner worth emulation. In the second, which deals more with the feud of Ravana against Rama, the diplomacy of Malyavat in instigating Parasurama and the despatch of Surpanakha in the disguise of the nurse-maid Manthara and also the intrigue of Malyavat and Valin, which are all innovations made in the original Rama-story, than the separation of Rama and Sita, it would be again a fruitless endeavour if we were to estimate the poet's capability at the handling of the tragic themes.

In the *Uttaramacharitam*, however, Bhavabhuti himself indicates the emphasis on pathos. In the Seventh Act, which is technically called the *garbha-nataka* — a drama within a drama — the Sutradhara or the stage-manager of the *garbha-nataka* composed by Bhavabhuti himself says that it is a sweet and nectar-like purifying composition resulting from the sage-like perception and contains the sentiments of pathos and wonder.

यदिदमस्माभिरर्षेण चक्षुणा समुद्वीक्ष्य पावनं

वाचनामृतं करुणाद्भुतरसं च किञ्चिदूपनिबद्धम् ।

Similarly, while describing the grief of Rama the dramatist himself says that the pathetic condition of Rama, unmanifest due to profundity and causing great torment inside is like the boiling of some drug in a closed vessel : अनिभिन्नी गभीरत्वादन्तर्गूढघनव्यथः ।

पुटपाकप्रतीकाशो रामस्य करुणो रसः ।

and implies the intensity of grief unmanifest, as providing the foundation for the feeling of pathos which reaches its high watermark with the change in the situation. Lastly, but not insignificantly, the controversial verse too, of the poet himself, formulates the theory that the only sentiment that predominates is that of pathos, while all other sentiments are transformations thereof, as the eddies, bubbles and waves are all but the various modifications of water —

एकौ रसः करुण एव निमित्तभेदाद्

भिन्नः पृथक्पृथगिवाश्रयते विवर्तन् ।

आवर्तबुद्बुद्तरङ्ग मयान्विकारा-

नम्भो यवा सलिलमेव हि तत्समस्तम् ॥



Now these three references to Karunarasa — specifically as coming from the pen of the dramatist himself directly, theoretically prove that the dramatist should be at his best in the depiction, description or suggestion of the pathetic sentiment. It would, however, be fruitful to review briefly how far in practice the poet has been able to achieve this none-too-easy task.

### Heights of Pathos

The first and the third acts of the “Uttararamacharitam”, according to modern critics bear testimony to the heights of pathos and renderness that the dramatist could reach and convey to the audience. In the first act, the good king Rama (Rama-bhadra) although prepared to abandon without a pang affection, compassion and felicity, nay Sita herself, for the sake of his subjects

स्नेहं दयां च सौख्यं च यदि वा जानकीमपि ।

आराधनाय लोकानां मुचतो नास्ति मे व्यया ॥

faints at the fall of the thunderbolt of words (वाग्बज्र) in the form of a mere whisper from Durmukha about the stigma that is attached to Sita of dwelling in Ravana's abode and still being accepted by the righteous Rama. The valiant ideal hero Rama, on regaining consciousness is led to a pathetic reflection (विमृश्य सकृणम्) on the cruel fate that has fallen on his beloved Sita, who is an embodiment of purity and gave succour to the worlds and yet is now rendered an orphan. ‘तावन्तस्त्वया लोकास्त्वमनाथा विपत्स्यसे’. Arising, however, to the occasion the new king (now turned into a tyrant) issues orders at once to Lakshmana to take Sita to the hermitage of Valmiki. The king in Rama turns at the very departure of Durmukha into a creature of more vital life and the lament bursts forth — I have turned into a performer of the most cruel and heinous deeds. (अतिनृशंसवीभत्सकमां) have as if delivered Sita into the hands of death as a butcher the domestic bird. (सौनिको गृहश कुन्तिकामिव) I am rendered untouchable now: the world is now turned upside down, (विपर्यस्तः जीवलीकः) what purpose is there for Rama to live any further, the world paled into insignificance (असारः संसारः). undoubtedly life was instilled into Rama for experiencing sorrow (दुःखसंवेदानयैव रामे चैतन्यमाहितम्. The climax is reached when Rama places the feet of Sita, who is asleep, on his head and weeps bitterly



saying that this is the last obeisance that he would make to her. This portrayal of Rama's conduct is indeed a picture of pathos and tenderness.

In the third Act where the scene is laid in the Panchavati and the two rivers Tamasa and Murala through a dialogue prepare the audience for the meeting of Sita and Rama unknown to each other, the dramatist has again risen to great heights in the suggestion of pathos. Remarkably suggestive is the soulful and pathetic statement or the recollection of Rama (behind the scenes) of the kinship of the trees and the deer in the company of the beloved on the banks of the Godavari, यत्न द्रुमा अपि शृगा अपि बन्धवो में, यानि प्रियासहचारमध्यवात्सम्. Later on, although more poetic than real, the comparison of the sorrow in the heart of Rama with the pile of smoke of the fire that is about to burn "अन्तर्लीनस्य दुःखान्नेरद्योद्दाम ज्वलिष्यतः उत्पीडन्वः, धुमस्य" also brings out the poignancy of the sorrow. The climax is here too reached as in the first Act in the outpouring of Rama: "My heart is bursting, the body falls asunder, the world is void, I burn within, my soul sinks and wretched that I am, what shall I do.?"

हा हा देवि स्कुटति हृदयं घ्वंसते देहबन्धः  
 शून्यं मन्ये जगदविरलज्वालमन्तज्वलामि ।  
 सोदन्तन्धे तमसि बिघुरो मज्जतोवान्तरात्मा  
 विष्वङ्मोहः स्थगयति कयं मन्दभाग्यः करोमि ॥

Thus we see that the poet-dramatist has laboured persistently in suggesting the pathetic sentiment and thus at times committed the fault of expressing too much that which could be suggested by a mere phrase. Viewing thus the potentialities of the great poet-dramatist Bhavabhuti in the field of suggesting the tragic sentiment, one cannot but agree with De that "this sentiment becomes sentimentality and his pathos the spectacular sensibility of the man of feeling rather than the poignant rush of tragic sorrow; he is a master of aggravated pathos rather than of heroic agony."

I conclude with a suggestion that although Bhavabhuti attempts no Karuna synthesis in 'एकौ रसः करुण एव' he indeed attempts to bring करुणाविप्रलम्भ on par with Karuna, the supreme primeval Rasa which gave birth to poetry—शोकः श्लोक्तवामागतः ।

— Courtesy : Akashvani



## Master E. K.: A Phenomenon

Dr. PREMA NANDAKUMAR

It was with profound dismay that one received the news of the passing away of Dr. Ekkirala Krishnamacharya on 17th March. Of course, for the thousands of his admirers and followers, the word "death" could not be associated with one who was not yet sixty and one who was profoundly alive and active in several disciplines: Yoga, Vedic studies, Astronomy, Homoeopathy, Creative writing, Palmistry and exegetical labours were but a few of the Master's many-splendoured genius. Indeed, there is no doubt that he would continue to guide them whenever the need arises.

Dr. Ekkirala Krishnamacharya was born on 11th August, 1926 in Bapatla. Significantly it was the 95th (Russian Calendar) birthday of Madame H. P. Blavatsky. His father, Dr. Anantacharya, was a noted Vedic scholar, and hence the Master received early initiation in our traditional lore. On the academic side, he received the M. A., and Ph. D. degrees of the Andhra University and entered the teaching profession. Simultaneously he began to work for world goodwill by bringing the East and the West together. Madame H. P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* had a profound effect upon him, and led him to establish the World Teacher Trust. He was guided by the Masters in many ways. Master C. V. V., in particular, seems to have been his main light in this spiritual adventure.

The main thrust of Dr. Ekkirala's message was, of course, the unity of mankind, a unity that beyonds space and time. His aim was to link the modern man purposefully with the Masters of Ancient Wisdom so that his genius could blossom fully. No man is a zero and even as each individual strives to become perfect in his chosen profession with the help of the Masters, he would be contributing to the upliftment and unification of mankind.

There was no miraculism in this theory of the Masters which Dr. Ekkirala had derived from Madame Blavatsky's significant



contribution: *The Secret Doctrine*. (In his room at Radhamadhavam, Visakhapatnam, one could not fail to be influenced by the large portrait of Madame Blavatsky who gazed at you from her deep, determined, mesmerising eyes.) Faith in the existence of great leaders — “the scouts of evolution” — was the only thing needed. A pure, simple life of Karma Yoga, good thoughts and incandescent faith attracts the contact of the Masters. That is how Dr. Ekkirala himself gained direct association with the Masters one of whom gave him several precious volumes of Pythagoras and another taught him the proper way to read *The Secret Doctrine*. However, the contact is only like the lighting of a lamp. Afterwards, the flame burns by itself, fulfilling its given place in the scheme of things. The Masters do not care to spoon-feed, for the individual must have his independent existence in self-development. Dr. Ekkirala denounced the clinging to the Masters idea in season and out of season and citing them for each trivial action of ours. Such Tamasic ignorance was but “astral self-stupefaction.” He said:

“The Masters have clearly indicated at every step, that unless the emotional nature is completely filtered off and until the pure intelligence is distilled out of the emotional nature, we cannot dream of meeting any Master. This should not be a point of discouragement, but it should be a stimulation point for us to purify ourselves.”

The method of “purifying ourselves” in the light of tradition must be based on sturdy common-sense. Dr. Ekkirala went to the heart of the matter when dealing with the traditions established by India’s *Sanatana Dharma*. While retaining the essential habiliments like the Upanayana, Gurubhakti and the Caste-system, he pleaded for using them in their true sense. Thus, Upanayana was “sending the disciple to live at the Master’s residence ... Even the child of a wealthy householder used to follow the teacher wearing a coarse waist-cloth and an upper cloth with a belt of rope and a stick in hand.” The boy went to acquire knowledge, learn self-control and discipline himself under the stern but loving eyes of the Guru. But today the Upanayana has become a mockery with silk clothes, rich presentations, a silver begging-bowl and a grand reception while the Mantropadesa is a formality forgotten in a trice.

The caste-system, again, was originally conceived as so many rights, duties and privileges for the welfare of the society. The functions may differ but there was no distinction of higher and lower among the orders. The four orders were to live and contribute to their best in a spirit of Dharma. Universal well-being was the ultimate aim.



Dr. Ekkirala felt that "small is beautiful" and also purposeful. He called for a village reconstruction programme and initiated work in the Srikakulam district to revive the Arsha Dharma. He believed that words unsupported by practice have no vital power. A true Karma Yogi, he directed the World Teacher Trust to take up several important activities. These activities include the running of homoeo clinics, classes and symposia on Veda-vidya and traditional literature, fullmoon meditations, Balabhanu Vidyalayams, a residential school at Hyderabad and New Era Healing Classes. *Homoeo Brotherhood*, *My Light* and *Naa Vani* are some of the journals published by the Trust. The chief aim propagated by the Trust is social reconstruction, national integration and human unity.

But Dr. Ekkirala contained many worlds. Tirelessly moving through the villages of India and often visiting foreign countries to guide his followers, he also found time to teach and write scholarly works in English, Telugu and Sanskrit. He began as a poet in Telugu. *Ritu Ganam* won early appreciation from Dr. C. R. Reddy himself:

"Even absolutely the book is noteworthy; but when one considers the youth of the poet, it must be regarded as a work of remarkable merit and of yet more remarkable promise for the future...The style is engagingly classic. It is a matter of gratification that he has not become a victim of slovenly modernisms in language or in thought. He has the gift of similes and metaphors, and of pathetic fallacy (Utpreksha) with occasional recourse to Slesha."

*Kavisamraat* Visvanadha Satyanarayana in his foreword to the volume has unqualified praise for this "young (*Chinnavadu*, *Pillavadu*) Krishnamacharya" whom he described as the worthy son of a great father, E. Anantacharya. He referred to the Vedic antecedents in the description of the seasons and found some of the verses describing the Hemantaritu to be as forceful as Vedic Riks though they were couched in modern Telugu.

His *Goda Vaibhavam* is a Kavya on the life-story of Andal. Dr. Ekkirala's life-long admiration for the Krishna-bhakti in Potana's classic as well as in Krishnadeva Raya's *Amukta Malyada* resulted in this imaginative recreation of Goda Devi's love for Krishna and her entering the spiritual blaze of Lord Ranganatha at Srirangam. The thirty cantos symbolising the thirty days of Goda Devi's Margasirshavrata were written at one stretch in the closing months of 1971, following a dream-vision, which itself came after his completion of the Parayana of the Dasama Skandha



where Krishna's flute-playing is described. He saw Goda Devi garlanding Sri Krishna with blue lotuses. As he began composing the Kavya, there descended upon him the devotional aesthesis treasured in the Veda Samhitas, especially the Suktas relating to Purusha, Vishnu, Sri, Bhu and Neela; there were also the intimations of Bhakti suggested by Parasara, Narada, Suka and the Alwars.

In the *Divya Prabandham* of the Alwars, Goda Devi's *Madhura bhakti* has a special place, and her *Tiruppavai* is a unique document. With the thirty verses of *Tiruppavai* in mind, Dr. Ekkirala detailed the spiritual experiences of Goda Devi. He introduced quite a few unconventional changes in the story. Thus the reclining form of Vatapatrasayi at Srivilliputtur is transformed into the Flute-Player image which plays hide-and-seek with the young Goda. We watch the idol's eyes come alive and Venugopala comes out to steal from her tresses a mari gold blossom. Titles of the cantos like *Sanchalanamu* (movement), *Mugdhata* (innocence) and *Upalambanamu* (irony) signify the progress of an individual soul through the mystic states of aspiration, vision, self-doubt, pining, the dark night of the soul, despair and illumination. The touch of the Supreme makes Goda Devi's devotional heart explode into a million ecstasies and she can have no more peace till she finds her identity with God. Dr. Ekkirala lavishes a shower of similes with a prodigal hand when describing the eternal wedding of Lord Ranganatha and Goda Devi. Anandamaya consciousness envelopes everybody on the occasion. The Lord is the King of Actors (Ranga Raja); the stage is Srirangam; the Mover the Lakshmi; the devotees don the dress of Goda Devi in this drama of divine love. We are assured by the Lord:

“Ranga naayika godayai rahi vahimpa  
Ranga mangala moorthiyai naama dalirpa  
Ranga varnamu neelayai raanamincha  
Ranga moorthiga ne nundu rangamandu.”

Dr. Ekkirala also authored several books of prose. There were the puranic novels *Puranapurushudu*, *Mandrajalamu* and *Purushamedhamu* and the puranic playlets *Subhadra* and *Aswaddhama*. His commentary on Potana's *Bhagavatam* known as *Rahasya Prakasamu* is justly famous. It is sad that the eminent scholar was not given time to bring this project to a triumphant conclusion. Detailed explanations of each situation and character in the light of the Vedic tradition as well as the Theosophical Way initiated by Madame Blavatsky make *Rahasya Prakasamu* a spiritual and literary treasure for the Bhakta and the Sahridayas. The explanations are in the spoken language and hence easily



assimilable for the common man eager to learn and follow the unique Sanatana Dharma propagated in India several centuries ago. Fortunately, Dr. Ekkirala was also an ideal teacher and had been imparting training to his students by involving them actively in this exegetic commentary. It is hoped that a few of them would complete the project as a fitting tribute to one who did so much for us, without asking for anything in return. Dr. Ekkirala indeed lived as per the rule enunciated by the Master Spirit Bhagavan Krishna on the Kurukshetra field:

“Thy right is to work only ; but never to the fruits thereof. Be thou not the producer of the fruits of (thy) actions ; neither let thy attachment be towards inaction.”

## Salvation

‘Kavisamraat’ VISWANATHA SATYANARAYANA

*I:* Oh ! Actor ! What is your idea of salvation ?  
And, what is your stronghold ?

*Actor :* The whole world dances on my face  
My expressions are my stronghold.

*I:* Oh ! Painter ! What are your thoughts ?  
And, what is your stronghold ?

*Painter :* The hearty form which emerges from the brush  
held between my fingertips  
is my stronghold.

*I:* Oh ! Musician ! What is your big idea ?  
And, what is your stronghold ?

*Musician :* If sweet Bharati identifies herself  
with my throat, that is my salvation.

*I:* I put this question to you also Oh ! Poet !  
What do you think about salvation ?

*Poet :* I am a Yogi. Leave me alone.  
Why do you disturb my tranquillity  
with your questions ?

—Translated from Telugu by Dr. Sankara Sreerama Rao



## Three-fold Path to Fulfilment

### A Note on Raja Rao's Fiction

Mrs. M. PARVATI DEVI

Due to the impact of the British on India two distinct branches have come into existence in our national scene. These are generally known as English-Indian literature and Indian-English literature. To the English-Indian group belong writers like Somerset Maugham, I. H. Myers, E. M. Forster, Rudyard Kipling, Edwin Arnold, and others, although some of them belong to the mainstream of English literature as well. To the Indian-English group belong versatile geniuses like Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo; poets like Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, Nissim Ezekiel, Pritish Nandy, K. V. S. Murti, Kamala Das, and others; autobiographers like Jawaharlal Nehru, M. K. Gandhi, and Nirad C. Chaudhuri; fictionists like Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Kamala Markandeya, Anita Desai and others. Among the novelists Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao occupy a unique position.

Of the "Remarkable Triad," Raja Rao is the most difficult but perhaps the most spiritually satisfying and enlightening novelist, for he makes generous use of religious and philosophical symbolism. A student of philosophy and religion, Raja Rao hails from Mysore State in India, has visited England and France, and is now settled in the United States. He has published two books of short-stories entitled *The Cow of the Barricades* (1947) and *The Policeman and the Rose* (1978); four important novels namely *Kanthapura* (1938), *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), *The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965) and *Comrade Kirillov* (1976). Raja Rao has declared that for him "literature is *sadhana* — not a profession but a vocation." While *Kanthapura* celebrates *Karmayoga*, *The Serpent and the Rope* deals with *Jnanayoga* and *The Cat and Shakespeare* is primarily *Bhaktiyoga*.



Raja Rao's collection of short-stories, *The Cow of the Barricades*, comprises all his themes and techniques in embryonic forms. He has developed for himself a charming poetic-prose style which is replete with his Indian upbringing and sensibility quite suitable to expound his difficult themes. "Javni", "Narasiga", "The Little Grain Shop" and "Akkayya" form a group which is full of sentiment. "Javni" and "Akkayya" deal with two typical South-Indian widows—belonging to the lower and upper rungs respectively of the middle-class, who signify selfless action. They are domestic *Karmayogins*, working for the happiness of others without looking for the fruits of action. This principle of *Dharma* or *Nishkamakarma* becomes the main theme of Raja Rao's Gandhian novel *Kanthapura*. "Nimka" is the story of a Russian girl, and it reveals the knowledge of a gifted writer who, as an initiated insider of India and Europe, deploys the sensibility of both the cultures. And this double sensibility is intensely amplified as the theme in *The Serpent and the Rope*. Prof. C. D. Narasimhaiah says that the title story in *The Cow of the Barricades* is at once a "fact and symbol of India in the bondage of foreign rulers". In style and content and technique, the story is the epitome of *Kanthapura*. "In Khandesh", "India, a Fable" and "The Premierre of Sakuntala" form another set in his collected stories which are replete with the fantastic and the metaphysical. The controversial story "The Policeman and the Rose" is "pure fiction whatever it signifies", and it is a sort of preface to the themes of the two novels *The Serpent and the Rope* and *The Cat and Shakespeare*.

*Kanthapura* is a miniature epic and, as Mulk Raj Anand puts it, it is presented in the technique of "bardic recital" or "the old wives' tale, ...couched as a recital".<sup>1</sup> It is akin to the *Purana* and the story is narrated by an old woman Achakka to a younger stranger. Raja Rao, well-versed as he is in Indian tradition, strikes the right chord in making an old woman narrate the story representing all grandmothers and mothers of India who are inveterate story-tellers. *Kanthapura*, employing the Gandhian legend and movement, brings forth in full force the role of a selfless youth, Moorthy, who is dedicated to Gandhian ideals. Moorthy infuses enthusiasm and instils courage in the folk to follow the Gandhian principles, along with him in his village *Kanthapura*, defying the Redman's Government with non-payment of taxes "even if the Government attaches the lands" and picketing toddy booths "for toddy booths are there to exploit the poor and the unhappy." Raising his voice higher he tells them:

We shall establish a parallel government and it is this government that will rule and not that, and the first act of



government is to appoint Range Gowda Patel again .. For the Congress is the people and Patel is the people's man and Range Gowda is our man and if the new patel comes and says, "Give me the revenue dues", you will say, "I do not know you ... you are not our man and we will offer you neither seat nor water, but never be harsh to them nor wicked, and above all", he said, ... "remember each one of you is responsible for the harm done by the other, and the first time violence is done against the police or those that are not with us, we shall stop the movement and wait for six months and more in penance and in prayer that our sins may be purified. Brothers and sisters, remember we are not out to fight against the demoniac corruption that has entered their hearts, and purer we are, the greater will be our victory, for the victory we seek is the victory of the heart. Send out love where there is hatred and a smile against brute force like unto the waters of Himavathy that spread outer boulders and sand and crematorium earth ... Obey your chief and love your enemy, that is all I ask of you. <sup>2</sup>

Herein lies the rare vision of an ideal young man renouncing everything in life, in discharging his *Dharma* to the society as a *true Karmayogin*. When Moorthy is arrested for promoting the zeal and patriotic fervour of the people of Kanthapura to become the followers of the Mahatma in his *Swaraj* movement, as a *true Satyagrahi* he vehemently refuses any advocate to be engaged to argue his case. He firmly believes :

"If truth is one, all men are one before it".<sup>3</sup> It is no wonder if Sankar, a lawyer of Karwar and another devout follower of Gandhi, is so much moved by the ardent faith of Moorthy that he whole-heartedly tells Rangamma "I love him like a brother and I have found no better Gandhist".<sup>4</sup> A teeming and prosperous village at the beginning of the novel, Kanthapura presents a deserted look at the end, almost all the inhabitants settling in the nearby village Kashipura as a result of their participation in the Gandhian movement. But the narrator's conclusion leaves no doubt about the fact that all of them have had great satisfaction of having added their mite to the task of liberating *Bharata Mata* from the foreign yoke. Thus, Moorthy, apart from being a *Karmayogin* himself, has converted Kanthapura itself into a place of *Karmayogins*.

*The Serpent and the Rope* is Raja Rao's *Jnanayoga* based on *Karmayoga*. If *Kanthapura* is a *Purana*, *The Serpent and the Rope* is an *Itihasa*. The hero Rama (Ramaswamy), who hails from



a village Harishapura in Mysore State, is a Brahmin, the son of a Mathematics Professor. He traces his geneology back to Vidyaranya (Madhavacharya) and still beyond to the sage Yajnavalkya, defies convention but respects creed and establishes himself as a true *Advaitin* pursuing *Jnanayoga* for his salvation. He moves between India and Europe as he is married to a French lady, Madeleine, who is five years his senior in age and who is a History teacher. He himself is engaged in research on the Theory of Albigenian Heresy, and he thus seeks to establish a link between the Eastern and the Western Metaphysical Schools of thought. The play of the Feminine Principle on this earth is exquisitely illustrated in the theme. On love between husband and wife, Rama and Madeleine discuss :

"That is why the Hindus are right, no man can love a woman for her personal self."

"Then, how does one love?"

"For the self within her, as Yajnavalkya said to Maitreyi, and I continued, "All women are perfect women for they have the feminine principle in them, in the Prakriti...?"

"And all men...?"

"... are perfect when they turn inward and know that the ultimate is man's destiny. No man is bad that knows, 'Lord, we be not of this Kingdom.' "

The hero endowed with subtle intellect and vast knowledge discusses and analyses and moralises on various topics (Politics, History, Science, Literature, Religion, Philosophy, etc.) and confirms himself in conviction by experience. He has become a Guru to others, and shows the way to five women for their salvation—Madeleine, Savitri, Catherine, Little Mother and Saroja. He thus fulfils himself in *Karmayoga* basically. But how about his own salvation? Incidentally in his *Jnanayoga* or *Jnanasadhana*, awareness flashes within that he has to go in search of a Guru to dispel the illusion of the Serpent and show it as the Rope, the Reality. Rama comes to grips with the Absolute through his Guru, Atmananda, at Travancore and thus becomes a true *Jnana-yogin*. Hence his long discussions on Religion and Philosophy and Metaphysics along with his internal spiritual drama leading to his ultimate tryst with Reality are aptly rendered in the first-personal narration.

Five years after the publication of *The Serpent and the Rope* appeared his third novel *The Cat and Shakespeare*. Though compact, it is a longer *Upanishad*. It is Raja Rao's bold venture



to suggest a link between the East and the West. The Cat is a symbol of the Universal Mother, adopted from the *Marjala-Kishora-Nyaya*. The lives of the two principal characters Ramakrishna Pai and Govindan Nair express the simplicity of joy and the sublime universality of Shakespeare. Raja Rao declares that the little novel is a book of prayer or *Bhaktiyoga*—total surrender of the self to the Self to attain *Moksha* or Salvation. Ramakrishna Pai is the true disciple of Govindan Nair who is a staunch believer in the Cat-kitten principle. Govindan Nair thus tells Ramakrishna Pai :

“... Ah, the kitten when its neck is held by its mother, does it know anything else but the joy of being held by its mother? You see the elongated thin hairy thing dangling, and you think poor kid, it must suffer to be so held. But I say the kitten is the safest thing in the world, the kitten held in the mouth of the mother cat. Could one have been born without a mother? Modern inventions do not so much need a father. But a mother—I tell you, without mother the world is not. So allow her to fondle you and hold you. I often think how noble it is to see the world, the legs dangling straight, the eyes steady and the mouth of the mother at the neck. Beautiful”.<sup>7</sup>

Pai lives in Trivandrum, as a clerk in the Revenue Office, away from his wedded wife, Saroja, who stays back at the native place with her son, looking after the estate inherited from her father. Pai meets Shanta, a schoolmistress who comes to his office concerning a land dispute. Shanta symbolises both *Sadhana* and the Feminine Principle :

Shanta is always mysterious, just as Saroja was always clear. Shanta always says two things at the same time. No wonder she and Govindan Nair like each other so much. She says: “How can anything mean one and one thing only? Look at the bilva tree ... So when you say it's a bilva tree, that means there is the tree and the light that makes it the tree.” If I touch you, Shanta, there is no light in that. She said: “I can see you have never been across the wall. For there you could touch me and see yourself touch me.” “What, what's special about that?” “The specialness is that it is not special. You think because I bear a child I am special. Very, very special, my lord.” “Yes, you are.” “But you know, as I teach in my school, all that is born had a mother. The father is not always so clear. Look at the bees and the flowers.” “So the mother



is necessary for all children. Thus motherhood has nothing special. And what about fatherhood ...?" She said: "There is proof."... "I am your proof. You are only seen by me. Who could know you as I know you? So the proof of my lord is me. The proof became concrete and became the child. I must know I am".<sup>8</sup> (*Aham Brahmasmi*)

Shanta's pregnancy and the anticipated birth of a son symbolise the beginning of Pai's fulfilment. He fulfils his duty towards his son by purchasing a house to which he adds second storey, and the third storey is yet to be laid. In Hindu philosophy, human body is likened to a house. The three storeys stand for the three-fold path—*Karmayoga*, *Jnanayoga* and *Bhaktiyoga*. Pai gets the basic *Jnana* from Govindan Nair (who symbolizes *Govinda* or *Krishna*), and under his able guidance Pai fulfils himself in *Karma* (duty) through Shanta who is the means or *Sadhana*. Govindan Nair, the personification of *Karmayoga* and *Jnanayoga* and *Bhaktiyoga*, is the perfect *Guru* to Pai. Govindan Nair redeeming the hotel prostitute (a victim of circumstances or *Karma*), and discoursing on subtle and wise and intricate philosophical topics (living them and exemplifying them to others—*Jnana*), and ably guiding Pai (for his salvation or *Nirvana*), shows himself to be the able *Guru*; and he is also instrumental to the eradication of Evil, the corrupt boss *Bhootalinga Iyer*; and thus his action is reminiscent of the *Bhagavadgita* ideal:

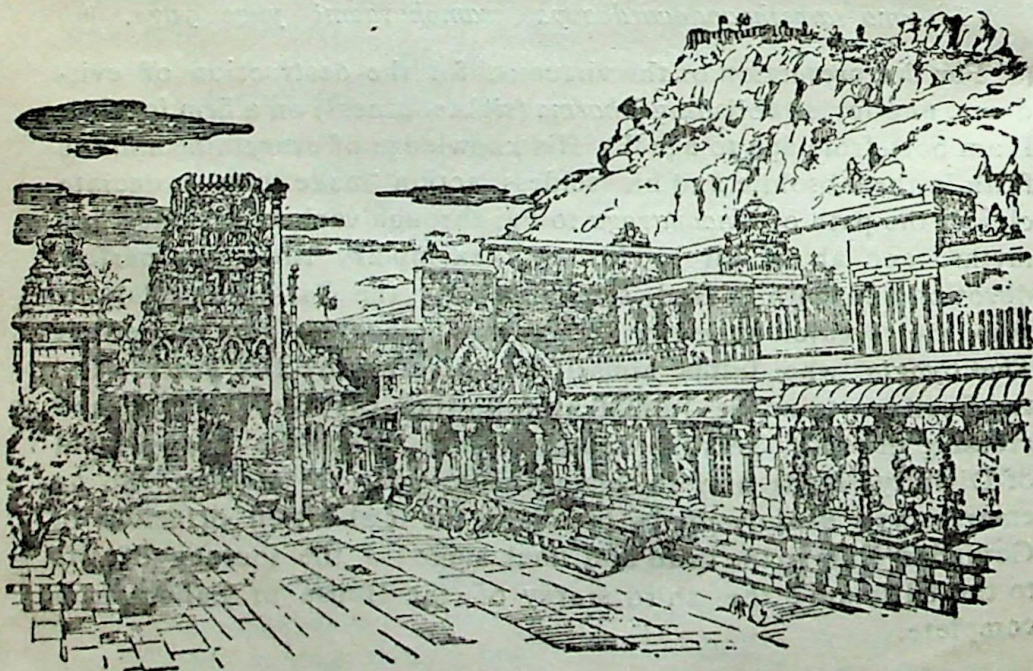
*Paritraanaaya saadhuunaam vinaasaayaca dishkritaam  
Dharma samsthaapanaardhaaya sambhavaami yuge yuge.*<sup>9</sup>

("For the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of evil-doers, and for establishing *Dharma* (righteousness) on a firm footing, I am born from age to age"). His knowledge of everything and his faith in the Absolute and his selfless action make him enunciate clearly the path of *Jnaanayoga* to Pai through various parables and myths, and above all by his own exemplary life. His perfect devotion and faith in God, symbolised by the Cat-kitten relationship, are revealed at every stage, thus rendering him a perfect *Bhaktiyogin* who fulfils himself in salvation by His grace. Pai too finally attains the fulfilment following the Mother Cat, and crossing the wall, gets the Beatific Vision. Thus the Cat, symbol of Divinity, leads him to his ultimate goal of *Moksha*. So he emerges as a *Bhaktiyogin* by practising the Cat-kitten principle of Govindan Nair in the third and final stage of the journey of life to the Ultimate: the third storey of the House of Salvation is complete.



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- <sup>2</sup>*Kanthapura* (Champak Library, 1947; First published by George Allen and Unwin, London. 1938), pp. 173-174.
- <sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 119.
- <sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 129.
- <sup>5</sup>*The Serpent and the Rope* (Orient Paperbacks, Hind Pocket Books, Delhi. 1968), pp. 310-311.
- <sup>6</sup>Cf. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Indian Writing in English*, (Asia Publishing House, Bombay.) p. 406.
- <sup>7</sup>*The Cat and Shakespeare* (Orient Paperbacks, Hind Pocket Books, Delhi. 1971), pp. 11 and 12.
- <sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.
- <sup>9</sup>*Bhagavadgita*, IV, 8.





## BEAUTY

JATINDRA MOHAN GANGULI

I had sat under a tree  
Under the bushy green leaves,  
To write in rhyme sweet,  
My mind was in dream,  
On a face I had seen,  
More sweet, more charming a face never been.  
So soft the cheeks, red the lips,  
What lustre in hair, love in eyes.  
I took a pen a poem to write,  
Her beauty and charm to describe.  
A line I wrote and another in praise,  
Then careless my eyes raise  
On a little flower there on bed,  
Its colour so bright and red.  
A breeze from far came to flirt,  
Shy flower swung from its thrust,  
In blush its face to me turned,  
I stared, my dream upturned.  
What beauty this, the other beauty outshone,  
My fancy to write the poem was gone.  
Meena's face, her beauty to write,  
I had taken the pen,  
The flower's face, O its beauty —  
What to write, how to write —  
I dropped the pen.



## THE RIVALS

(Short story)

PALAGUMMI PADMARAJU

*(Translated from the original in Telugu by Dr. D. Anjaneyulu)*

The Godavari was in spate. The turbid waters, swirling in smokelike rings, were terrifying even to the bravest. Washermen, however, are undaunted; they swim into midstream to salvage trees and branches and bring them to the bank. By day-break they enter the river. By sundown, the bank is full of twigs and sticks.

While the men dare into the midstream, the womenfolk, from the side-lines, try to pull back the wood-pieces afloat with the aid of hooked poles. The Godavari was quite astir during those times. While the swollen river uproots whole forests and takes them along its current, men try to obstruct it and collect all those pieces on the bank. Man thus retains his mastery over nature.

Collecting them thus requires a lot of skill, not merely strength. When you catch hold of a tree in midstream, you can't control it, unless you let yourself be controlled by the stream. There is a challenge in this art, which is a yardstick of the washermen's skill. It is not only the greed for firewood that goads them on, but honour in the game. The winner here is a hero. So, they risk their lives even against the whirlpools.

Rami is a notoriously tough girl. A tiff on everything with everyone comes naturally to her. Under the twilight of dawn, she sets out for the riverside, with a hooked pole. Which means that none can approach that part of the river for the day. If any one dares, well, it is but an invitation to a quarrel. For she has a sharp tongue. Twice or thrice, the police tried to threaten her, but they gave up, when she exploded as was her wont. She would,



of course, grant that she didn't own the river or the trees. But, no lawyer was able to convince her of the right of other people to encroach on an area which she was the first to occupy. Whatever be the question of right and wrong, more people were scared of her tongue; and no woman dared to approach her part of the riverside.

Venkadu is quite a jolly fellow. He can easily pick up a quarrel. He is the hot favourite of all the grown-up girls in the dhobi hamlet. He is a hero in their eyes. There has been some enmity between his father and Rami's for a long time now. Venkadu's father had even set fire to Rami's house once. The mere sight of Venkadu was enough for Rami to start cursing him. But he never bothered himself too much about it, because of his innate chivalry. All the girls however, were allergic to Rami, whom they called a "tomboy."

Venkadu came to know that Rami had been scaring away all the womenfolk from the riverside. One day he went there to see the situation for himself. Rami was busy collecting the twigs. Two or three women were standing by on the bank eyeing her enviously. Venkadu took a hooked pole into his hands.

Rami, at once, flared up: "You scamp! Come to compete with a woman?"

Venkadu: You ... a woman? Not that I know of... Watch your words, or else, you and your hook will be in midstream.

Rami: Why have you come to a place which I had occupied first? No shame?

Venkadu: Is the riverside your father's property?

Rami: I came first.

Venkadu: I came next.

Rami: Impudent rascal ... crossing swords with a woman...

Venkadu: If you promise to be just and quiet, I shall leave.

Rami: Quiet, my foot! I will pick up all my twigs.

Venkadu: O. K. ! Those beyond your reach ... let me take.

Rami: Beyond my reach, only in midstream!

Venkadu wouldn't admit defeat by leaving the place. He threw his raft on the bank and began to pull at the twigs with the hook.

Venkadu was at a loss to find out how to subdue her. All the other girls of her age would readily succumb to his wink. She alone seemed defiant. Despite the family feud, he never



openly offended her. Nor any others, for that matter. But he must now subdue her, somehow.

It was Rami who surpassed Venkadu in collecting twigs from the bank. He watched her skill and grace in the act. Half of the sticks that touched his hook slipped away into the stream. Any stick that touched hers was sure to reach the bank. However much he tried, many of them escaped his grasp. It never struck him that so many of them could be collected from the bank. He sat there in amazed admiration of her expertness.

That day, the Godavari was very fierce. Dark clouds enveloped the sky on all the sides. Slight drizzle, with strong winds. Many of the washermen were afraid to get into the river, that day.

Venkadu, however, chose to enter the river, with the raft under his chest. He didn't feel like sitting on the bank, competing with a woman. He dared to enter, because few others were ready to do it. Some followed him. He was pushing all his sticks to Rami's side. And she was catching hold of them with determination. By the afternoon, all the others had left; and Rami and Venkadu were left alone. Though he was very tired, Venkadu did not want to leave, before Rami.

It was getting dark, the drizzles heavier, the winds stronger.

"How much longer will you stay?"

"How much longer will *you* stay?"

Venkadu was about to enter the water again. Rami stood gracefully on the stones on the bank, pulling at the twigs.

"Be careful! You might slip into the waters!"

"Take care of yourself; you needn't pull me out, if I slip in."

"Brave talk, if you were to slip in, I alone will have to pull you out."

As a big tree floated ahead, Venkadu swam in towards it.

The tree was very heavy and he was very tired. He wouldn't have jumped in, but for the rivalry with Rami. He somehow got hold of the tree and was slowly moving towards the bank. He looked up towards the bank, it was all dark. Struggling slowly, he could see it faintly.

Up to her waist in the water, Rami was trying hard to hook a heavy branch.

"It's pretty difficult, leave it alone", he shouted at her.

"You better look after your own tree", she retorted.



What is she to him? The obstinate wretch—doesn't she know? She gets in deeper, only to die. But he couldn't help looking towards the bank. Rami staggered once, and steadied herself. Venkadu suppressed a shout, and trying not to look that side, was swimming towards the bank.

Meanwhile, there was a sound of something slipping down. His heart sank and his hands left the tree. He looked up; and Rami wasn't there.

He swam towards the bank, as fast as he could. Ten yards downstream he could see a head swirling. He lifted Rami up with one hand. She clung to his neck with both her hands. Both of them sank; but he freed himself with difficulty and was able to float and breathe. Rami became unconscious. He slowly placed her neck on his back and steadied himself with the other hand. The current then pushed them both away from the bank. He was wondering if he could reach the bank. His hands were becoming unsure and his breath unsteady. Eyes shut, he was dragging the two bodies towards the bank. It was like an age by the time his hand felt the bank, where it was sharply cut by the stream. With a great effort he raised his hand and placed it on the bank. A lump of earth gave away and both of them sank again. He was about to pass out. Somehow, slowly he carried both the bodies to the bank. He lay supine for a time to regain his breath.

Rami's body stirred. There was a faint moan. He got up and turned her this way and that. In her sub-conscious state she held his hand in both hers. In that touch of hers she seemed to say a lot and he seemed to understand it all.

Lifting Rami to his shoulders, Venkadu set out for the washerman's hamlet.

Strange to think! She obviously realised that he had rescued her. He had said that in so many words. And now, it has come to pass.

He had a rivalry with her. How did it arise? Why did he hate her all these days? If she was arrogant, why should he bother? He was bent upon subduing her, but failed. That was the cause of his chagrin. No girl was a match to her in catching twigs. She was a true girl. A trifle stubborn, of course; so what? Is he not stubborn, himself?

She slipped into the water, and he rescued her. He never did such a noble deed before. This time, she was subdued by him somehow. He thought that he had a moral right over her body, which he had saved after a struggle. He felt he had conquered her.



He saw in her a grace, a smoothness and a softness that could be found in no other girl in the world.

When she came to somewhat, she pressed his hand in both hers. There were many things in that touch — gratitude for saving her, admission of defeat in the wager...

Gently putting her down, Venkadu called out to her parents.

A large crowd gathered around them. Rami's mother began to beat her breast, crying hysterically. Her father collapsed to the floor, dumbfounded.

The caste elders present were trying to revive her — some pressing the water out, others warming her by a slow fire.

Rami's mother began to wail aloud, "The son of a bitch has killed my darling daughter!"

Venkadu was not hearing this wail. His tired eyes were on Rami.

As Rami stirred a little, opening her eyes half-way, Venkadu approached her. He alone was able to see the warmth in her pain-distorted looks. His heart missed a beat.

These looks only confirmed the suspicion of Rami's mother. She began to cry louder: "The son of a bitch! He's killed my darling, when no one is around!"

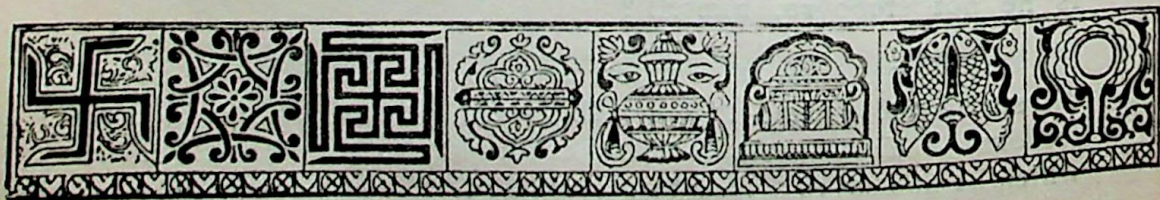
Venkadu stood aghast. Was this the reward for all his labours?

Rami began to breathe hard. Her father remembered all the old scores with Venkadu.

"I'll fix you; I'll call the police," he said, leaving the place in a huff.

Had he been more tired, Venkadu would have been drowned in the Godavari, along with Rami. He had rescued her, after a great struggle, but to no effect, it seemed. Only the suspicion of a crime remained.

The whole world appeared wicked to Venkadu, in which he and Rami seemed out of place.





## Tulsidasa's Devotional Poetry

### A Note on "Kavitavali"

Prof. P. P. SHARMA

How all-consuming was Tulsidasa's passion for Shri Rama is evident from the fact that even after writing a full-length epic on his adored hero he kept returning to the story of his life, his struggle with Ravana and his marvellous exploits. It looks as though the poet was never weary of, in fact was eager for, celebrating Rama's exemplary qualities and chanting his glories. Whenever he gets an opportunity, he lets himself go with abandon, be it in *Vinayapatrika*, *Geetavali*, *Barvai Ramayana* or *Kavitavali*. The last-named quickly traverses the enormous ground of *Ramacharitamanas* by focussing on the selected episodes. However, its distinctive feature is to be found in the final section called "Uttarakand" which is self-revelatory and testifies to the saint-poet's personal devotion.

There is a lot of rage these days for what is designated as "confessional" poetry. One wonders why psychoneurotic problems, emotional imbalances and disturbances of an individual, the various clues to his sense of guilt, should be of such overwhelming attraction for the literary critic. Why should the lower urges like libido and suicidal tendencies be made so much of? Why should it be considered modish to gaze at the seamy side only? Would it not be more helpful to see the upward strivings of a God-dedicated person rather than waste our time and corrupt our taste by wallowing in the nightmarish region of the Id? Moreover, those who value "confessional" poetry for its honesty should keep in mind that this virtue is not the sole monopoly of their kind of poetry. Is it, one would like to ask, honesty or a desire for self-dramatization, that makes the confessional poet dwell largely on the abnormal and the aberrant? Actually, devotional poetry is nothing if not honest and it's honest in a more serious sense. Arising out of the devout poet's transaction with his chosen deity.



this poetry is transparent, laying bare the very soul of the poet ? I would like to corroborate this dictum by citing a few instances from " Uttarakand " in *Kavitavali*.

It is a well-known fact that Tulsidasa's early life held no promise of what he came to be later on. He himself is struck by this contrast and makes no secret of the metamorphosis that comes over him. This is how he puts it : " The world said that this man ( Tulsidasa ) was heavy with sin, humble through penury, and wore rags and tatters. Fate had not written anything for him and even in a dream he couldn't walk on his own feet. But today the self-same Tulsi has become Rama's servant. " This is better understood than stated. This transformation ( of a sinner into a saint ) has not taken place without his worshipping Rama, the shepherd of the monkeys. Attributing this change to the effect of Rama's name he says that it is Rama's name that has made this man, ever a donkey-rider, mount an elephant.

A tendency towards self-debasement is inevitable in a devotee's attitude towards his deity and this is very much in evidence in " Uttarkand. " This is the self-portrait that Tulsidasa offers us : " Neither do I know the Vedas nor the songs of the Puranas. So also I am ignorant of science and knowledge. I cannot boast of any competence in concentration, meditation or in going into a trance. It is not in my fortune to cultivate detachment, practise Yoga ( spiritual exercise ) or perform sacrifices. I am deficient in generosity and in the giving of alms. Only I am strong in sin. Who is my equal in such infirmities as greed, attachment, worldly ( sensual ) desire and anger ? Even Kaliyuga ( the corrupt age ) has learnt my impurities. Oh Rama, I have just one hope. I am called yours. You are compassionate and brother of the poor ; mine is only poverty. " In another stanza, going on in the same strain he says : " One who has evil in his speech, whose actions are wicked, whose mind is devoid of discrimination and is a veritable storehouse of filth, such a one is making his living by being called a Rama's man and by selling his name without engaging in service and good company. There is no other reason for such a Tulsidasa being called a nice man by the world than that, as is seen in life here and there and as found in an old proverb, a dog is treated well because of the attachment for its master. " What can be such an utter destitution as that of Tulsi who has no means of subsistence, who but for the protection of Rama Incapable of offering as an oblation to his deceased ancestors even the hair of his head ?

Among nine forms of devotion mentioned in our Shastras, there is one closely akin to friendship. Although the dominant



tone in Tulsidasa's poetry is that of a servant to his master characterized by utmost humility, at times he does use a bantering tone also. "In the world," he mockingly says, "has spread the false fame that I am your servant. You never owned me, considering me unfit for that favour. However, your name which I have been repeating has proved greater than yourself." Boastfully he asserts that the scale will dip in his favour against any man of good deeds because of the weight of Rama's name with him. Elsewhere he argues with Rama that in the past he had come to the rescue of bandits and prostitutes. Has he taken completely to new ways as to judge him by his merits before offering him the refuge of his lotus feet? Pride is regarded as a deadly sin but Tulsidasa declares that he has this pride in his heart that he won't go to any other man or God asking for help except Rama.

Tulsidasa's prayer is generally addressed to Rama but like a devout Hindu he offers obeisance to the other gods of the Hindu pantheon as well. Shankar is the principal among them. His body smeared with ash, the slayer of Kaama, bearing the Ganga among the matted hair, his spouse Parvati as his left half, wearing the serpents as ornaments, adorned by the garland of heads, the crescent on his forehead, drum and skull in his hand, carrying a trident, this naked and poison-eating Shiva is very easy to please. There is, however, no absolute depending on him. Did he not create a problem for himself by granting the boon to Bhaskarasur by which he threatened to reduce the giver of that boon himself to ashes? Only by dropping a couple of bilva leaves, knowingly or unknowingly, in anger or just in play, one secures everything that his heart can yearn for. When Tulsidasa was once afflicted with some dread disease he prayed to Shankar to cure him in view of his strong attachment to Rama whom Shankar knows so well. Similarly he bursts into panegyrics on the goddess Annapurna Parvati, Ganga and the monkey God, Hanuman. Feelingly he prays to Hanuman to save Kashi from the depredations of the plague and reminds him that he had set things right when they were going wrong with Rama himself.

Devotional poetry derives its strength from sincerity. It's just a dialogue between the poet and his adored, or more correctly, a monologue, because it is only the poet who is doing all the speaking. He is so completely lost in the rapture of communion that the idea of any other audience does not occur to him at all. All his talents and energies are used in pouring out his love for his deity, sometimes remonstrating with him, sometimes even in indulging in a mild jibe at his expense. At all events, the presence of the deity is patently felt throughout or the kind of poetry



that Tulsidasa writes cannot be written. His total surrender to Rama and his complete absorption in him, make him the saint-poet *par excellence* that he is. The English metaphysical poets of the 17th century use a great deal of what has been called "conceit" which should never be dismissed as a dispensable contrivance. A properly used conceit does not detract from the poet's sincerity. Tulsidasa, while singing of the glory of the sacred river Ganga, introduces this conceit: "O Ganga, if as a result of watching your water I am turned into Vishnu, then I would be sinning because of my touching you with my feet (Ganga originates from Vishnu's feet). If I become Mahadeva, then I would be afraid of bearing you on my head because that would involve me in the serious wrong of claiming equality with the Lord (Shankar). Rather, I would like to be born again and again so that I can be forever Rama's servant living on your bank."

It would be interesting to compare Tulsidasa's devotional poetry with that of John Donne, a near-contemporary, though estranged by the wide chasms of the seas and other physical barriers. There is room to mention just one significant detail. Donne invokes the Lord to put him in a certain condition, whereas Tulsidasa describes himself to have arrived in that state; in effect, he is permanently fixed there. To quote from one of Donne's prayers, "And when thou shalt have inflamed and thawed my former coldness and indevotions with these heats, and quenched my former heats with these sweats and inundations, and rectified my former presumptions and negligences with these fears, be pleased, O Lord, as one made so by thee, to think me fit for thee..." In Tulsidasa, this sought-for transformation has already taken place. With his being steeped in the divine presence of the Lord manifest in the form of Rama, Tulsidasa sings in the ecstasy of devotion which has been experienced by only a few like Tuka Rama, Mira and Sura. Since this kind of poetry comes gurgling out of the depth of the poet's heart, language being all the time at his beck and call through some mysterious process, it penetrates the reader's sensibility with a corresponding force. That is why Bhakti poetry in India has outlasted all the vogues and modes.





## The Impact of Indian Renaissance on Modern Telugu Literature

"AMARENDRA"

The Indian Renaissance came like a fresh breeze into the suffocating atmosphere of the conventional literature of Andhra in the later half of the nineteenth century. The Prabandha tradition became petrified by stale imitations which failed to capture the freshness and imagination found in the earlier works like *Manucharitra* and *Vasucharitra*. Erotic element, bordering on obscenity, dominated poetry which primarily catered to the pleasures of the rulers. It did not reflect the contemporary life and its problems. Prose was highly Sanskritised, pedantic and stiff, unsuitable for communication of common feelings and day-to-day experiences. It mostly consisted of paraphrases of classics in poetry like *Bharatam*, *Bhagavatam* and *Ramayanam*. They were as difficult, if not more; the diction was equally bombastic and the sentences ran for pages without any punctuation. Commentaries written in such prose rendered no help to the reader in understanding the spirit of the classics. The characters depicted by writers, in verse as well as prose, bore no resemblance to living men and women. They were like "dolls of wood" devoid of any warmth of feeling.

The literature of the half of the nineteenth century was as conventional as the social structure of the period. Society became stagnant as it was hidebound by rules and taboos. Real spirit of religion was stifled by rituals and superstitions as "the clear stream of reason lost its way in the dreary desert sand of dead habit." Moral values were at a low ebb. Caste-system became so rigid that society got divided into water-tight compartments. The plight of the untouchable became dismal and deplorable. The stranglehold of orthodoxy curbed all tendencies for change. Prostitution was recognised and given shelter even in temples.



Into that benighted world of the nineteenth century the influence of the Renaissance came like a ray of light and hope. The establishment of the University in Madras and the dissemination of new values through the study of English literature marked the beginning of a new stir of intellectual awakening. It happily synchronised with the Reformist Movement, originating in Bengal and sweeping the educated classes in Andhra. The British pattern of education proved a blessing, as it infused a spirit of revolt against many social evils, rituals and superstitions which undermined the true basis of religion.

Into such vitiated atmosphere came the first glimmers of the Renaissance Movement. In the cultural history of Andhra, Renaissance and Reformation worked hand in hand exerting a liberalising influence on life and literature. This was the first wave of the Renaissance and the second wave came in the 'Twenties when the Romantic Movement swept the literary world.

The torch-bearer of Renaissance in modern Telugu literature was Kandukuri Veeresalingam. Inspired by the theistic idealism and the reformistic zeal of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the father of Indian Renaissance, Veeresalingam wielded his gifted pen as a mighty weapon. He fearlessly fought against age-old superstitions, exposed corruption in high places and the moral turpitude of the aristocracy. He gave a new impetus to prose literature by introducing many literary forms from English literature. He made a rational approach to social and religious problems of his day. The emergence of modern Telugu prose is a valuable gift of the Renaissance. It shed stiffness and pedantry acquiring ease, force, clarity and simplicity. Even though Veeresalingam followed the rules of Grammar, he imparted to prose directness and vigour necessary to expound and propagate his reformistic views, moral values and theistic doctrines. He earned the epithet "Gadya Tikkana" (A writer of epic dimension in prose) for employing powerful prose in forms like essay, novel, literary criticism and diaries, besides journalistic writings and farces. In the first phase of the Renaissance in Telugu literature many classics were translated and adapted. A contemporary of Veeresalingam, Vavilala Vasudeva Sastry translated Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Veeresalingam translated *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*, adapting them to suit Indian setting and atmosphere. The beginnings of drama in Telugu prose stemmed from the influence of Shakespeare's plays. Inspired by Shakespeare's historical dramas Panuganti Lakshminarasimha Rao wrote a cycle of plays based on the theme of *Ramayana*. His social plays like *Kanthaabharanam* and *Kokila* owed much to the



Shakespearean comedy. He wrote periodical essays entitled *Sakshi* under the inspiration of the spectator essays of Addison and Steele, on a rich variety of topics with his characteristic humour and satire. The credit goes to Veeresalingam for writing the first novel, "*Rajasekhara Charitra*" (1880) inspired by *The Vicar of Wakefield*, the first autobiography and the first authentic biographies of ancient poets. His works in prose and verse displayed a severe moral tone and high seriousness of purpose.

Though Sir Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu wrote and delivered sermons in English, he exerted deep influence as a powerful moral force. He worked for the abolition of nautch parties in marriages and social functions. He strove for the amelioration of women who were branded as Devadasis giving them the due place of honour and dignity in society. Long before the advent of Gandhi he started schools and hostels for the untouchables and struggled hard to wipe out the stigma of centuries. With his exalted spiritual vision he laid bare the "wrongs of man and pleaded for the rights of women." His teachings transcended narrow religious barriers and propounded universal spiritual ideals. Like Veeresalingam, he also stressed the underlying unity of all religions and strove to popularise the worship of the absolute God who has no name or form and whose boundless grace embraced the entire cosmos. Under the leadership of Veeresalingam and Venkataratnam, Brahma Samaj gained momentum. The gifted lyricist Devulapalli Krishna Sastry became its literary exponent.

The devotional songs and poems of Devulapalli Krishna Sastry gave expression to the alternating moods of despair and rapture, to the adoration of the Lord of the Universe whose beauty is marvellous and love boundless. The twin-poets Venkata Paarvatishwara Kavulu excelled themselves in their moving poem *Ekaanta Seva* which takes us through all the phases of love of the human soul for the divine, who is a shining embodiment of love. The agony of separation, the pining for communion and the rapture of union are described with rare intensity of feeling, delicacy of touch and sweetness of diction. They used a folk form of verse, Manjari Dwipada, a complete form, investing it with grace, charm and dignity.

The nationalist ideals and aesthetic values of Indian Renaissance were ably expounded by Sri Mutnuri Krishna Rao in the pages of his famous weekly *Krishna Patrika*. The fervour of his nationalism mingled with the artistic appreciation of the glory of ancient India. The lofty idealism of Rabindranath Tagore, the artistic revival and innovations made by Abanindranath and Nandalal Bose were brought within the range of comprehension of



the common reader, by him in his weekly. He was more than a mere journalist because he embodied in his noble life and writings the true spirit of the Indian Renaissance. His participation in the anti-partition movement in Bengal helped him to visualise India as a mighty mother. He was inspired by Bankim-chandra who installed the idol of Mother India on the pedestal of a million hearts. His writings emphasized the hidden principle of unity behind the baffling diversity of languages and religions. He held before the readers the ideal of synthesis found in Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Gandhi, the modern Trinity, which seeks to reconcile the apparent contradictions in life. His sublime prose style aptly suits the noble thoughts and high values which he expressed in his impassioned writings.

Honourable mention shall be made of Sri K. Ramakotiswara Rau whose motto was to popularise the ideals of the Indian Renaissance. He started a quarterly magazine in English entitled *Triveni* and devoted his entire life for the spread of the message of the Renaissance which he envisaged as a confluence of the three streams of Love, Wisdom and Power. Even during the pre-independence period, he strove to bring about a cultural integration by encouraging translations into English some of the masterpieces of different languages of India. He served as a precursor of the Central Sahitya Akademi by emphasising the principle of unity underlying the diversities of language and region. He dedicated his noble life to the cause of the Renaissance idealism sacrificing all that he had at the altar of national resurgence.

Poet Gurazada Appa Rao played a great role in the spread of Renaissance ideal by revolting against the traditional patterns of verse and employing the colloquial prose in his drama *Kanyasulkam*. Deriving inspiration from the simple folk melodies, he popularised "Mutyaalasaram" (a wreath of pearls). He employed this new measure to describe the ecstasies and agonies of common people. His poems dealt with the lives of humble folk—the daughter of a priest, Poornamma, the daughter of a trader, Kanyaka, and an untouchable girl in *Lavana Raju*. They are creatures of flesh and blood but not figments of imagination like the characters in the Prabandhas. Though he was modern, he made a plea for a happy blending of the old and the new because he did not ignore the heritage of the past. He advocated a practical, dynamic spirit of patriotism which actively sought to better the lot of the common man. He held that the welfare of the country meant the uplift of the people. His comedy of manners *Kanyasulkam* exposed many social evils with an inimitable touch of humour and wit reminding us of Congreve, Sheridan and Goldsmith. His reformist zeal was matched by his artistic sense



that his works never appear as bare propaganda. Though the problem of child-marriage does not exist today, the play has not become dated because of the life-like characters and refreshing humour. His play illustrates the second phase of the impact of the Renaissance.

Revival of India's ancient glory was one of the aims set forth by the Indian Renaissance. Chilakamarti Lakshmi Narasimham roused patriotism through his moving poems, novels and spirited translation of Todd's *Tales of Rajasthan*. To cite an example, his memorable poem described the plight of India thus :

“ Bharat is a fine milch-cow  
While Indians wail like duped calves  
The whitemen, like subtle cowherds, muzzle the calf  
And milk her dry. ”

Rayaprolu Subba Rao, the oldest among the living poets, distinguished himself by composing memorable poems on the glory of India, on the great heroes of history and the glory of Andhra. His speciality lies in harmonising the love of Andhra glory with the unified vision of Indian culture. He became the leader of the Romantic Movement which came as an offshoot of the Indian Renaissance. The second wave of the Renaissance came in the 'Twenties when the romantic poets broke new ground. Rayaprolu Subba Rao regarded love as the greatest motive force in life. He exalted love in his poems and achieved great distinction by elevating it to a sublime level. His theory of “ Amalina Sringara ” has inspired many romantic poets to deal with the theme of love in an exalted manner. Woman is given a high place of honour in life and the poet never described the physical features in the erotic and provoking style of the decadent poets. She is portrayed as an uplifting and sanctifying force in the human life. Poets like Devulapalli Krishna Sastri, Viswanatha Satyanarayana, Vedula Satyanarayana Sastry, Basavaraju Appa Rao, Adivi Bapiraju Nanduri Subba Rao and Nayani Subba Rao offer idealised pictures of woman's beauty, and the exalting influence of love in their inspired lyrics and poems like *Krishnapaksham*, *Kinnerasaanipaatalu*, *Yenkippaatalu*, *Shashikala* and *Dipavali*. Pining for the beloved became a recurring theme. Universal love inspired the poets to soar to lofty altitudes of imaginative splendour. Intense personal note was struck by these poets who were encouraged by Sivasankara Sastry. His poem “ Hridayeswari ” portrayed the longings of unrequited love and set the beloved on the altar of adoration. He started the trend of poems on love which were in vogue for two decades, from the 'Twenties of this century until the outbreak of the Second World War.



While the other poets expressed themselves in lyrical fragments, Professor Pingali Lakshmikantam and Katuri Venkateswara Rao composed a narrative poem "*Soundaranandam*" dealing with the story of Nanda, the step-brother of Buddha. The poem is unique because it unfolds the story of Nanda's passionate love for his beautiful wife Sundari. They could not bear a moment's separation from each other because of fond attachment. When the Buddha knocks at their door for alms the call goes unheeded. The Buddha causes separation between Nanda and Sundari and enables him to perceive the spectacle of sorrow which cries for redress. "The stream of love surging from the heart shall inundate the entire universe without confining itself to a mere embodiment of feminine charm" exhorts the Buddha and thus opens the eyes of Nanda. The poem traces the stages through which erotic infatuation is finally transmuted into universal compassion which seeks to wipe the tears of the orphan the bereaved and the helpless. In range and depth *Soundaranandam* occupies a special place among poems on love because the action is set against the background of the Buddhistic period and also reflects the essence of Gandhian thought.

Deep concern for the lot of the common man may also be considered one of the aspects of the Renaissance. The glory of empires is transitory but the life of the common man with its round of simple joys and sorrows flows on. Poets like Jashuva and Duvvuri Rami Reddi portrayed the lives of the peasants and the downtrodden with great warmth and tenderness. Rami Reddi's *Krishnavaludu* portrays the life of the peasant which is marked by grinding poverty, unremitting toil and contentment. In his poem "*Gabbilamu*" (The Bat) Jashuva presents pictures of ancient glory which contrast with the present degradation. He chooses the bat which strays into the dark and dismal hut of a Harijan as his messenger and makes a fervent plea for the uplift of the downtrodden in order to establish the equality of all men recognising human dignity. The emphasis was shifted from Royal personages to the ordinary men and women struggling against social injustice, poverty and misery. The ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity ring through their poetic utterances when they sing of a world free from class-hatred and inequality and when they assert the greatness of human personality breaking through the trammels of caste and creed.

Special mention shall be made of Tripuraneni Ramaswamy Chowdary who inherited in full measure the rationalistic approach of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. With remarkable literary skill he exploded many myths by examining them in the clear light of



reason. His humanistic and rationalistic approach to life and its problems has won for him a distinguished place among modern writers. His *Suuta Puraanam* stands as a literary monument of rationalistic thought in modern Telugu literature and deals a strong blow to the myth of Brahmin superiority and ritualism, dogma and superstition.

Many poets were inspired by the great heroes of history. *Sivabhaaratam* by Gadiyaram Venkata Sesha Sastry, *Raanaaprataapa Charitra* by Rajasekhara Sataavadhaani, *Andhra Puraanam* by Madhunapantula Satyanarayana Sastry, *Potanacharitra* by Vaana-maalai Varadacharyulu, *Bapuji* by Jashuva and, *Karunasri* by Jandhyaala Paapayya Sastry were motivated by the noble spirit of hero-worship. As remarked by Carlyle, the history of a nation is a collection of the biographies of its great men and women. Sivaji, Ranapratap, Potana, Bapuji, Goutama Buddha and Sri Krishna Devaraya inspired our poets to trace their shining footprints on the sands of time. In this context we shall mention *Hampi Kshetram* by Kodali Venkata Subba Rao, who recapitulates the vanished glory of the unforgettable Vijayanagar Empire. It is a masterpiece which evokes visions of the splendour of the great empire that was consumed by relentless Time, but which lingers on in the memories of the Andhra race as a glorious epoch in their history.

Love of beauty as manifested in nature and enshrined in works of art is one of the finest features of the Renaissance Movement. The romantic poets, unlike the poets of the former ages, observed Nature in all her moods and offered delicate pictures of scenic beauty. The lyrics of Krishna Sastri, the poems of Kavikondala Venkata Rao, and the songs of *Yenki* by Nanduri Subba Rao abound in pictures of natural beauty which are fresh and fascinating. They represent accurate first-hand observation and sensitive presentation of the beauties of Nature. Jashuva's *Mumtaj Mahal* depicts the glory of art which conquers time. The poem is a tribute to love which knows no death and which has inspired the building of the Taj that shines in the moonlight like a "teardrop in marble" on the cheeks of eternity.

Contribution of Dr. C. R. Reddi to the field of literary criticism is noteworthy. Though he made his debut as a poet with his *Musamma Maranamu*, a narrative poem which extols the immolation of a young lady for the welfare of her community, he made his mark as a literary critic with the publication of *Kavita Tatva Vicharamu*. Before he entered the field, literary criticism was a dull and drab affair concerning itself primarily with dates and amendments. Under the influence of English critics like Matthew Arnold, C. R. Reddi introduced impressionistic



comparative methods of criticism and rendered great service by interpreting the spirit of the classics. He was the first critic who pointed out the action and inter-action between society and literature. He applied to Telugu literature the critical canons which he derived from the study of English literature, during the first phase of the Indian Renaissance. Though he wrote traditional literary prose, he welcomed innovations in the sphere of poetry.

A typical product of the Renaissance in the field of criticism is S. Sanjiva Dev. As an art-critic he stands unique because of his interpretation of the soul of Indian painting and sculpture. His portraits of famous artists help the reader to appreciate the distinct qualities of different schools; animated by a rare creative urge, his literary criticism reveals depth of penetration and breadth of outlook.

It sounds paradoxical that radical social reformers like Veeresalingam and Raghupati Venkataratnam were reactionaries in politics who considered the British rule an act of Providence. So they could not keep step with the changing times when Gandhian call for direct action roused the nation. Gradually Gandhian thought added a new dimension to the Indian Renaissance. Struggle for freedom became a mass movement under Gandhi's leadership which brought the common man to the forefront and stressed the need for purity of means to achieve noble ends. Garimella Satyanarayana's song "Enough of this whiteman's rule" was on the lips of all who fought for liberation from the foreign yoke. Tummala Sitaramamurti translated Gandhi's autobiography (*Aatmakatha*) into verse and was rightly hailed as the poet-laureate of Gandhism. The historic Dandi March during the Salt Satyagraha Movement inspired Basavaraju Appa Rao to compose his spirited lyrics on Gandhi as the liberator and the spinner of India's destiny. The impact of Gandhi on the fabric of social and political life of Andhra was powerfully delineated by Unnava Lakshminarayana in his novel *Maalapalli* which was written by the author when he was imprisoned for participating in the struggle for freedom. In the pages of the novel the writer presents an attractive panorama of life in all its aspects. As a product of the Indian Renaissance the author upholds Truth, Beauty, Goodness and Love as the abiding values which enhance the significance of life. Adivi Bapiraju's novel "Narayanarao" breathes the spirit of the Indian Renaissance and pays tributes to the creditable achievement of music, poetry, art, dance and philosophy. The novel describes the tensions in the mind of an Idealist, a votary of beauty and love who struggles hard to come to terms with the realities of life. We find in its pages an open-minded approach to the winds of change blowing from all



directions. The novel is totally free from jingo patriotism, narrow chauvinism and unhealthy obscurantism. But on the other hand Viswanatha Satyanarayana's novel, *Veyi Padagalu* (Thousand hoods) represents the revivalist aspect of the Indian Renaissance. We find a nostalgia for the past which has vanished beyond recall. The author firmly sets his face against Western culture in a mood of total repudiation of all that is modern. Distrust of the present and despair about the future peeps through every line of this bulky novel.

In rousing patriotism, an essential feature of Indian Renaissance, the contribution of Venkataparthasarthy Kavulu is considerable. They translated Bengali novels like *Ananda Math*, *Durgesanandini*, *Kapala Kundala* and others. In addition to translations they wrote original novels like *Matru Mandiram* making a plea for the regeneration of India. Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham's novel *Ahalya* won a large circle of readers because of the author's skill in reconstructing the past and the latent message to revive the great traditions of the past. On the occasion of the Gandhi, Centenary Mahidhara Ramamohan Rao published a good novel *Kollaayi Gattitenemi?* (What if he wore a loin cloth?) which faithfully traces the influence of Gandhian movements on the pattern of rural life in Andhra during the three generations of time in his own village.

The drama in Telugu literature started with translations and adaptations of classics in Sanskrit and English. It developed a distinct identity much later when Gurazada Appa Rao wrote his *Kanyaasulkam* and Vedam Venkataraya Sastry his *Prataaparudriyam*. The former is a social comedy, while the latter is a historical drama with a patriotic appeal. While *Kanyaasulkam* was written in vivacious and virile prose style, the pedantic Venkataraya Sastry employed colloquial prose for low and minor characters in the play. The movement initiated by Gidugu Ramamurthy to shake off the fetters of grammatical rules and to bridge the gulf between the written and the spoken word may be deemed as an expression of the desire for freedom from tyranny and domination which was generated by the Renaissance. Gurazada Appa Rao with his progressive vision readily responded to it. Though the prose style was classical in the dramas of D. L. Roy which were translated into Telugu, they had a great impact on the audience. Dramas like *Mewadpatan*, *Roshanara* and others kindled the spark of patriotism in a thousand hearts. During the struggle for freedom Damaraju Pundarikakshudu wrote and produced dramas like *Gandhi Vijayam* and *Ramarajyam* wherein the politicians of the time figured as characters. The dramas played a creditable role in bringing about national awakening and instilling the desires for freedom from British domination.



Besides *Krishna Patrika* and *Triveni* mentioned earlier, the Telugu daily *Andhra Patrika* and the monthly magazine *Sharada* and *Bharati* exerted strong influence on the readers by popularising the ideals of the Renaissance as well as creating a burning desire for freedom. Under the editorship of Kowta Sriramasastry *Sharada*, a monthly magazine, held aloft the banner of Renaissance idealism by publishing valuable articles on painting, sculpture, art, music and literature. After its publication ceased, *Bharati* under the editorship of Kasinadhuni Nageswara Rao made its appearance. To this day *Bharati* continues to be a powerful vehicle of culture and literature, upholding traditions of liberalism and good taste. During the hey-day of the Romantic Movement, Sahiti Samiti under the presidentship of Sivasankara Sastry brought out a monthly magazine *Sahiti*. It gave a fillip to young writers and encouraged new excursions into the fields of short-story, novel, diary and letters. Later, Navya Sahitya Parishat overshadowed Sahiti Samiti by adopting a more radical and tolerant attitude. Its official organ was a quarterly named *Pratibha* edited by Telikicherla Venkataratnam. It became the nucleus of modern writing which began to seek fresh woods and pastures new. All the experimental writings of Sri Sri were first published in *Pratibha*.

The Renaissance gave an impetus to historians and scholars to delve into the treasures of the past. Apart from the scholarly historians there was a poet who was lured away by history. Mallampalli Somasekhara Sarma started as a poet and then turned to historical research. His literary touch enlivened the historical writings which are totally different from the dull chronicles which present dates of wars without any redeeming feature. Somasekhara Sarma holds a distinct place among our historians because of his creative insight which penetrates into the past and brings alive the whole scene.

With the rise of the progressive movement in the 'Forties, Romantic School of literature received a setback. Under the strong impact of Marxist ideology the idealism of the Renaissance slowly receded into the background. The dream of the ideal world of the Renaissance governed by Truth, Beauty and Goodness began to fade away. Purposiveness and social awareness became the watchwords of the Progressive School which debunked the past, with the promise of a rosy millennium. Sri Sri became the herald of a new era, swearing by dialectic materialism and viewing with contempt the products of tradition. He carried the banner of revolt into the citadels of literary convention and breaking the barriers between prose and verse. He ushered in a new idiom which was entirely different from the lyrical outpourings of the Romantics. The second wave of the Indian Renaissance which



touched Telugu literature in the 'Twenties began to ebb in the early 'Forties (1924-1943). "Another race hath come and other palms are won." The New dawn to which we all look forward along with the progressives has yet to break on the horizon. Democratic ideology and scientific temper will have to be cultivated in order to prepare us to greet the dawn of another Renaissance which makes all the dreams of the present the accomplished facts of tomorrow. In Shelley's words let us "Hope till hope creates of its own wreck the thing it contemplates."

But as a consequence of the Indian Renaissance patterns of literary expression and traditional lines of thinking were gradually replaced by idealistic and visionary outlook on the problems of human life. New modes of expression came into vogue to articulate new urges. It is no exaggeration to say that the Renaissance has given a new Earth and a new Heaven to the writers and poets of Andhra who enriched literature during the first half of our century. Let us not harp upon the vanished glories of the past but anticipate with hope the unknown splendours of the unborn tomorrow. "The Best is yet to be!"

## The Child and the Man

T. S. DEVARAJAN

Behold the child that plays on the lawn,  
Merrily and swiftly does he gambol like a fawn,  
Like a Lark he comes on the sunlit morn,  
Adding glory to the beauteous dawn.

The flower-beds and the meadows hail him,  
The warbling birds above greet him,  
The running brooks below elude him,  
The ringing bells afar delight him.

Cares or worries he has none,  
Joys and sorrows alike to him are one,  
Success or failure to him is a fun,  
And little does he aspire for things beyond his ken.

And now the rolling years have made him a man;  
The sweet past with him is but a dream that has gone,  
Care sits on his face and mirth moves away from his speech  
As in life's laboured journey his goal he strives to reach.



## VISION OF THE SACRED DANCE

( *Tiru - k - kuuṭtu - t - taricanam* )

From Tirumular's Tirumantiram

*Translated from the original in Tamil by*

K. C. KAMALAI AH

[ For a proper understanding of the Nataraja Theme a study of the 82 verses of *Tirumantiram* by Tirumular is a *must*. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy has quoted a number of verses from the *Vision of the Sacred Dance* in his *Dance of Siva*. This is the first instalment of the verses, and two more would follow. — Editor ]

Everywhere is the Holy Frame, everywhere is Siva Sakti.  
 Everywhere is Chidambaram and everywhere is the Sacred Dance.  
 Everywhere as Sivam pervades it is a play for Sivan  
 And He exists anywhere, everywhere and bestows His Grace. (1)  
 This Effulgent Light of Wisdom, this Siva Ananda Dancer,  
 The end of the Word, this Dancer of Beauty,  
 This Dancer of the Golden City, this Dancer of Golden Tillai,  
 This Marvellous Dancer — who can know Him ? (2)

### Siva's Dance of Delight

See ye the lofty Dance of Delight, sweet as honey,  
 O'er the Sakti of everlasting bliss, endless !  
 To the Dancing Lord transcending wisdom,  
 It is the dance stage for the Dance of Delight. (3)

The dancing stage is bliss, the songs are delightful,  
 The many instruments and organs give tunes delightful.  
 The movables and the motionless are in delight.  
 • It is delight to the Lord taking to the Dance of Delight. (4)

Sivakami is an amalgam of the Supreme Radiant and  
 Perennial Being.

To the faithful, the Supreme imparts eternal joy.  
 The destination of Siva's Dance of Delight  
 Is the Heart as the Lord's habitat. And the mind gets pure. (5)



The dances are five. The Formless Dancer  
 Taking a Form with the five vocations in view,  
 Merciful in all His actions, carries on the five activities.  
 The Partner of the Damsel of Honey'd Word dances the  
 Sacred Dance. (6)

The world of five elements and others different,  
 The one of enjoyment, the one of Yoga,  
 The one embracing all these, the one of salvation  
 And the one of yearning for it, the bodily world  
 And the one of thirst — all these go to make  
 The vast universe united to the Feet of the Lord  
 Who in his five vocations rules over it. (7)

The Vedas are chanted, the lofty Agamas are followed;  
 The psalms are sung; the seven universes are moving;  
 The elements dance, the satellites all vibrate,  
 With the Lord dancing to rhythm the Dance of Delight  
 and Wisdom. (8)

The Lord He is the Siddha dancing in collusion  
 With the five elements, organs and senses,  
 With the Five Vedas and Agamas in plenty,  
 With the practising arts, Time, Eternity, Universe and  
 Knowledge. (9)

The gods and the demons, the humans, the supernals,  
 The Vidyadhars, the Three and the ancient Thirty-three,  
 The ascetics, the Sattars, the religious, the Still and the Unstill,  
 All throb to life with our Lord dancing. (10)

### The Dance of Beauty

Beyond and far beyond the seven worlds is a power  
 Enthroned at the pinnacle of the ever auspicious,  
 Where the Lord with a black throat, the very Grace personified,  
 Took to dancing witnessed by Uma. (11)

The Monarch of the reputed forest of Tillai,  
 The Heavenly Tree with deep roots,  
 Seeks for dancing besides Kodukotti, Pandarangam and Kodu,  
 The Dance of Destruction, the eight dances  
 And also the Five and Six. (12)

In the universe far beyond rest the feet of Parasakti.  
 On the universe far beyond fall the luminous rays of the Lord.  
 Far beyond the universe spread the sound waves.  
 In the universe far beyond the Sovereign Lord dances. (13)

Of branches of knowledge, Faith is the leaping hook.  
 To the rhythmic time beats of *thom-theem*,  
 Sankara dances His eternal dance at a vital spot,  
 Permeating the innermost recesses, ceaselessly. (14)



My Lord dances acts of vocation and also the nine modes.  
 He dances in the crematorium and in the heart too.  
 He dances at the central point, concluding  
 His dance recital, dancing in endless wisdom. (15)

In the five Saktis and the five forms of Siva,  
 In the eight deliverances and the foremost eight positions,  
 In the eight *siddhis*, the eight destinations,  
 And in the eight *suttis*, the Lord dances the ancient dance. (16)

The clouds seven and the seven islands of the vast sea,  
 The bodies seven and the seven rays of Sivabhaskaran,  
 The tastes seven and the seven Santis —  
 All these subsist under the feet of the Lord. (17)

### The Dance of the Golden City

In the south and the north, the east, the west and the top  
 In each one of the marvellous five faces,  
 In the unequalled celestial delight,  
 The One, the Absolute executes the only dance. (18)

Devotees are those who had the vision of joy of Haran's Feet ;  
 Devotees are those who have been the beneficiaries of the Lord's  
 Grace ;

Devotees are those who journeyed to the Feet of the Lord ;  
 Devotees are those who had a vision of the Sacred Dance in  
 the Hall of Gold. (19)

Repressing the irrepressible 'I' in me,  
 He places His Feet on my head,  
 Taking me to the Tower of Bliss, the eternal abode,  
 Dances Nandi the Dancer, from whom knowledge springs,  
 The Omniscient, who in me too lies deposited. (20)

The Dancer among the gods, the Foremost of dancers,  
 The knightly Dancer in the lofty golden theatre,  
 The Dancer among the souls, the Supreme Dancer  
 Him I seek with joy and worship with love. (21)

Who can describe Him — This Dancer gem of purest serene,  
 This Dancer with matted locks of hair on the bedecked stage,  
 This Bright Blaze of Light, this Siva Ananda Dancer,  
 This Dancer of unalloyed gold of the purest variety ? (22)

They breathe long, feel restive and stumble ;  
 The body gets tired. They are not themselves.  
 Such are those who bestow their affection.  
 On the tender Flower-like Foot,  
 In dance on the Sacred Stage, the best and flawless- (23)



The mind wanders not, perplexes not ;  
 The body rids itself of tiresomeness.  
 The breath is held ; the inner self drives away desires  
 The yearning for blissful union gets goaded within—  
 All to witness the Dance Drama. (24)

The Lord dances with Kali and on the Mount of Gold ;  
 He dances with the devil and over the world,  
 In the vast sheet of water, fire, wind and endless ether,  
 Day in and day out in the open theatre. (25)

Midway between the left and the right lines,  
 Runs the central line touching Meru,  
 Signs of which Lanka exhibits.  
 The land between the Tillai Forest and Malayam,  
 Is the Land of Siva in the central region. (26)

The Meru Mountain in the north,  
 And the Deccanam in the far away south,  
 Between the two is the Sacred Stage in the Centre of the  
 universe,  
 Where the Lord donning the crescent moon dances. (27)

( To be continued )

#### Notes

- (1) Siva Sakti — Siva's Energy. cf. Tirumular's another Tirumantiram Verse : " He is the One. The other part of Him is His Sweet Grace. "
- (2) Siva Ananda Dancer — Siva who dances the Dance of Delight.
- (5) Sivakami : The Beloved of Siva. The Lord is Hermaphrodite. The masculine and feminine parts of Siva have been sculptured in plenty in the form of Ardhanarisvara.
- (6) The Supreme who is formless takes a form. The five acts of God are : (1) Creation, (2) Sustenance, (3) Destruction, (4) Illusion and (5) Grace. They form the theme of the Sacred Dance.
- (9) The five elements are : (1) Ether, (2) Fire, (3) Water, (4) Air and (5) Earth.  
 The five organs are : (1) Body, (2) Mouth, (3) Eye, (4) Nose and (5) Ear  
 The five senses are : 1) Touch, 2) Taste, 3) Sight, 4) Smell and 5) Hearing.
- (10) The thirty-three are : Adityas 12, Rudras 11, Vacus 8 and Maruts, 2.
- (12) Kodukotti : Dance. Terrible is the Dance of Destruction during the performance of which the Lord dances clapping His hands joyously in victory.



*Pandarankam*: After destroying the three cities — *muppuram*, besmearing His body with the burnt ashes of the cities, the Lord dances.

*Kodu*: The Lord dancing with the skull of Brahma in His hand.

The Eight Dances are: Besides the dances relating to His five acts, three more dances, viz., Kali Dance, Muni Dance and the Dance of Delight.

- (15) Nine modes are four with forms, four formless and one form-cum-formless.
- (16) *Parai*, *Adi*, *Ichcha*, *Kriya* and *Naanam* are the five Saktis. Brahma, Harl, Haran, Isan and Form-cum-formless Sadaslyan.
- (25) Dancing with Kali: But for the Lord vanquishing Kali in dance competition, the world would have been devoured by the latter. cf. Manikkavacakar's *Tiruvacakam* Verse: The Lord of Tillai's Court a Mystic Dance performs, What is that, my dear? But for the Lord dancing, it would have been a prey for Kali, Blood thirsty, holding a spear in hand.

## Peace and Plenty

M. RAMAKRISHNA RAO

Violence and crime  
How did they come  
Into this world of peace and plenty?  
Peace and plenty?  
Was it ever there  
At any time and anywhere?  
It never was  
And never will be  
Except in man's goodness and care.  
For, if men do spare  
Their surplus fare  
There sure is peace and plenty!



## BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Dr. D. ANJANEYULU

"India, is a land of many languages" — it sounds like an overworked cliché to say that. It is a significant fact, nevertheless. There are at least 15 languages, recognised by the Indian Constitution; and about 24 or 25 of them recognised by the Sahitya Akademi (or the National Academy of Letters).

Turning to literature, we speak of Indian literature (in the singular) as well as of Indian literatures (in the plural). Strictly-speaking, it has to be recognised that there are, or could be, as many literatures as there are languages. That is the literal fact, which we cannot get away from. But most, if not all, of these literatures have a common source of inspiration, as also a common experience — emotional and intellectual. This gives rise to a feeling of shared values, along with a cherished tradition.

As in the wider field of culture, so in the narrower arena of literature, it is, therefore, possible to think of unity in diversity, which is why it is observed, in a happy blend of actuality and idealism, of understanding and aspiration, that Indian literature is one, though written in many languages. But the trouble with some of us who seem to mistake parochialism for patriotism and linguistic chauvinism for cultural nationalism, is that *diversity* is projected at the expense of unity, the gains from which could be temporary and in terms of regional politics, while the loss is more permanent in terms of national history. A greater loss is of our own perspective today — we miss the wood for the trees.

How could we possibly avoid this ever-present, but now insistent, danger? By not losing sight of the national identity, always present, perceptibly or imperceptibly, in our literature or literatures, and by not deliberately and even perversely, setting our face against the factors that make for cultural unity. Mountains could be made of mole hills by prejudice of one kind or another, which is born of ignorance — of some basic facts of our life and literature, not to speak of the concepts of philosophy and culture.



A good starting-point could be a study of comparative Indian literature. While comparative literature, as an academic discipline, is a new subject in Indian or foreign universities, some kind of comparative study is implicit in the very process of literary criticism and artistic appreciation. Only the tools have to be sharpened, and a suitable methodology has to be evolved for the purpose.

Just now, we do not seem to have many, or even any, standard books for a professional study of comparative literature in India. *Comparative Indian Literature*, in two volumes, launched as a Silver Jubilee Project of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi, is a welcome publication. It is edited by Dr. K. M. George (who is the Chief Editor and Director of the Project) and published by Macmillan India, which could be a guarantee of its intellectual standard and quality of production.

Even this publication is not strictly an exercise in the comparative study of Indian literature, as the term is apt to be understood. It is essentially a history of Indian literature with a generic approach, which could, in view of its consequent design and structure, facilitate comparative studies of the various constituents of Indian literature. For instance, in volume I, which was released earlier this year, the whole subject in view is discussed under six sections — viz., Language, Folk Literature, Traditional Poetry, Modern Poetry, Drama and Novel.

Volume II, to be released towards the end of the year, covers the rest of the subject under six, other sections, viz., Short story, General Prose, Biographical Writings, Literary Criticism, Children's Literature and Literary Movements. There are useful appendices, containing glossaries of literary terms and other references.

Apart from the panel of contributors drawn from writers and critics of experience in the different regions, the chief editor is ably assisted by an editorial board of seasonal teachers well-versed in their respective languages as well as in English.

By and large, a creditable performance on the part of all concerned in this ambitious, pioneering project.

Not only the Kerala Sahitya Akademi, but individual Kerala writers and critics in English have taken the initiative in projecting writers and aspects of writing, which had not received adequate attention until recently.

Prof. K. Ayyappa Paniker has done well to undertake the editing of a new series of monographs, entitled "Kerala Writers in English," which reminded me, in content as also in format, of the handy and handsome series, sponsored by the British Council on English authors, and brought out by Longmans. The British series comprises about a hundred titles.



The present series has so far covered half-a-dozen writers—A. S. P. Ayyar by K. P. K. Menon; Menon Marath and Aubery Menon by Mohammed Elias; K. M. Panikar and Manjeri S. Isvaran, both by K. Ayyappa Paniker; K. P. S. Menon and P. Palpu both by N. Viswanathan.

Not all of the writers discussed in the series so far are creative writers in the true sense of the word, not even critical or constructive writers who can stand scrutiny without the aid of regional sentiment. As far as the present reviewer is concerned, the best known to him are Manjeri S. Isvaran and K. P. S. Menon and the least familiar is P. Palpu.

Isvaran has a special claim to be remembered in the pages of this periodical, of which he was once the Associate Editor in addition to being a regular contributor. That apart, he was one of the most sensitive of short story writers, a poet in prose as well as in verse. I can hardly think of any other Indian writer in English, who was conscientious in his craft or committed to literary and human values, in which he believed. Many of his short stories are exquisite portraits of Indian, especially South Indian, life, in miniature. That long short story or *novella*, *Immersion*, remains a classic—in emotional substance as well as in style. His poems, not that powerful perhaps, manage to reflect his flights of fancy and virtuosity as a stylist. Worth remembering how Isvaran and Marcella Hardy did a good job of editing Shakespeare's "Henry IV, Part I" for an Indian publisher. Ayyappa Paniker does justice to the work of Isvaran—his psyche as well as his style.

Perhaps, when a Paniker meets a Panikkar, it is not Greek meeting Greek! It is almost like an admirer meeting his idol. Ayyappa Paniker is more than just to K. M. Panikkar. He is outright generous. He is hardly able to see any faults (of excess) or defects (of inadequacy) in his subject. It is true that Sardar Panikkar was intellectually resourceful, versatile in his interests, and prolific in his output. But his writing is glaringly un-literary, with a style that is not only flat and pedestrian, but downright clumsy. Even his flaunted originality was not above suspicion, for he had an admirable flair for making books out of books! He was frankly an overrated writer. A more balanced and really critical estimate would have been in order.

K. P. S. Menon was among the luckiest of human beings—a real favourite of the gods, if there were any. He didn't die young, of course! He lived a long and full life—enjoying life at home and abroad. As a writer, he was eminently readable—a delightful raconteur, without a touch of malice or jealousy. I, for one,



didn't feel like reading him a second time; nor could I decide what he believed in or what he stood for — besides success everywhere and roses, roses all the way! The monograph is, likewise, readable, without leaving a lasting impression.

As for A. S. P. Ayyar he was a scholar, deeply attached to the traditional values. He was more of a scholar than an artist. It is a moot point how far he deserves the place of precedence in this series.

The forthcoming titles are — Kamala Das, Pothan Joseph and G. Parameswara Pillai. They are all awaited with interest.

In a multilingual country, there is no possible way of the classics, ancient or modern, of one language, reaching the readers of the other languages, without the aid of translation. The process of translation seems to be quicker, as also more satisfying in the continent of Europe than in the sub-continent, or even the Union of India.

Though Hindi may be the largest spoken language in India, English still remains the first language of literary communication through translation. Here too, Kerala writers are probably better served than any other regional writers, with the possible exception of Bengali and Hindi. Among the more experienced translators from Malayalam into English is Mr. V. Abdulla, who has had a good innings in the field of publishing.

Three of the modern writers of Malayalam fiction chosen by Mr. Abdulla for translation are: Vaikam Muhammad Basheer, S. K. Pottekkatt and M. T. Vasudevan Nair. The first is represented by two collections — *The Love-letter and other stories* and *Voices and the Walls*. Basheer is a distinguished short story writer, noted for his insight into human nature and poetic sensibility. He could be seen at his best in the longish title-piece, "*The Love-letter*" tender, whimsical, unpredictable. The translation is competently done, with all the nuances of colloquial Malayalam well-captured. Some of the shorter stories are wispy, insubstantial.

*Poovan Banana* is another longer story, depicting Moplah life, on the merits of which there could be two or more opinions. A semi-literate trade union leader subdues the proud and temperamental graduate daughter of a rich family, by methods which can only be described as crude and brutal. This obviously reflects another side of Basheer's character — crude, brutal and primitive, which only an un-regenerate male chauvinist could approve. This has only a superficial resemblance to Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* and can hardly be held up for unqualified admiration (as Prof.



G. Kumara Pillai seems to do in the introduction). Anyway, this can't be held against the translator, who has done a conscientious job.

From Indian literature to Indian History — of the modern period. It is one of the saddest facts of the history Indian politics, of the pre-independence period that the era of the moderates is either completely ignored or inadequately covered by the modern Indian historian. The commonest tendency is either to run down the moderates and liberals as "loyalists" (and traitors to the cause of independence) or damn them with faint praise.

In point of actual fact, the so-called moderates were second to none in their patriotic feeling, personal courage or integrity of character. Only they believed in constitutional methods of agitation, because of their faith in the British Government's respect for the "Rule of Law." It would be hard to think of more genuine human material than that represented by Ranade, Pherozeshah Mehta, Gokhale and Sastri or Sapru and Jayakar later. None of them was a time-server or a place-seeker. They knew that hard words broke no bones and it was better to use moderate language to express strong sentiment and canvass reasonable demands.

Gokhale, the archetypal Moderate, was not exactly trusted by the British Indian Administration.

"I mistrust Gokhale," wrote Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy, in a confidential letter, "more almost than any man in India, as he is watching for our mistakes, and is the only Indian who knows how to play the waiting game."

Gokhale believed that the future of India was in the hands of Indians themselves. His words came true when Edwin Montagu made his famous declaration in 1917.

When he delivered his first budget speech in 1902, in the Imperial Legislative Council, with Lord Curzon in the chair, it fell like a bombshell in that sedate assembly.

These and many other revealing facts from the Moderate era are brought out in his recent Dadabhai Naoroji Memorial Lecture in Bombay by Mr. B. R. Nanda, eminent biographer and political historian.

The Moderates, especially Gokhale, were the link between 19th century economic and political thought and the economic and political thought as it developed in this century. They had also made the task of Gandhi easier. But for the habit of throwing all restraint to the winds in the Gandhian era, we



continue to suffer the consequences. He sowed the wind and we reap the whirlwood. A natural and necessary corrective would be to turn to the wisdom of the Liberals, for selective absorption.

Mr. Nanda has rendered a true service to the politically-minded intelligentsia of today by turning the focus on the moderates and presenting their ideas in the proper perspective.

Students of Indian History would be happy to learn that Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri's *magnum opus* "The Cholas" has been reprinted by the University of Madras. To appreciate the value of this book it is, however, not necessary to class him with great historians of literary merit like Gibbon, Macaulay and Trevelyan. For Sastri is no Gibbon. He has neither the brilliant style nor the magnificent sweep of the latter nor even the keen insight. But his facts are sound, his style is plain and his judgments are cautious. He can be a useful guide on the subject, though some of the conclusions of his study are overtaken by more recent researchers in the field.

## TWO POEMS

Dr. PANOS D. BARDIS

University of Toledo, Ohio

### Modern Eve

Lovely, wise, and always smiling,  
Youthful, sparkling, and beguiling —

Never has a gem thus shone,  
New the mind and new the beauty—  
Eve, at last, has done her duty !

### Julian's Despair

Nine Muses danced and sang in joy  
On sylvan hills, in the moonlight.  
No Muse survived the stellar dawn—  
All dreams dissolve in this new light !



## REVIEWS

*The Gandhi Reader*: By Homer A. Jack. Samata Books, 10, Kamaraj Bhavan, 573, Mount Road, Madras-6. Price: Rs. 90.

This compilation of writings both of the Mahatma and of others on him, is a most desirable one which was released long ago, soon after the Mahatma's death, by an American, Mr. Homer A. Jack. In 1956 the first publication of this valuable book was ushered into the world. Fortunately Sri Sadanand has brought out this Indian edition, which is a reprint of the same American volume.

Within nearly 500 beautifully printed pages, the present anthology contains portions of Mahatma's autobiography, the rest bearing extracts from many sources both of press cuttings and the pens of close participants in the Indian Freedom Struggle and other contemporaries such as Mahadev Desai, Jawaharlal Nehru, Tagore, C. F. Andrews and Jinnah. In three parts dealing with periods 1869 to 1914, 1915 to 1933 and 1933 to 1948, information worth-knowing have been brought in, in such a manner that the fresh reader of the book may not be deprived of all the significant events of the Mahatma's career amidst a nation feeling his presence as a god-send and of the entire world believing in him as "a human being for the ages."

Some of the highlights in the volume necessarily pertain to the South African phase of his experiments with non-violence, his Indian leadership campaigns with stirring events such as the Salt March, the epic fast before the amicable settlement with Dr. Ambedkar with regard to the Untouchable problems, the Quit India Movement, the Noakhali march to stem the tide of communal strifes, the various meetings of important men and women to discuss urgent matters affecting humanity at large, and fill the pages keeping the eager reader to be constantly reminded of the great power that the Mahatma wielded over many sections of politicians and thinkers of philosophical and cultural outlook.

With the very brief Introduction, the Notes, Bibliography, the Index, etc., this Indian edition printed with admirable execution



will really prove a find to all students of both the present and coming generations to have a very correct estimate of one of the greatest individuals who struck the entire humanity as more a saint than a politician. As mentioned in the foreword to this publication the book may, now after the popular Gandhi film, which once again made the Mahatma live in the hearts of people, "rekindle discussion of Gandhi's life and teachings."

— K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

*Indian Philosophy: Past and Future* : Ed. by Rama Rao Pappu and R. Puligandla. Motilal Banarsidas, Bungalow Road, Delhi-110 007. Price : Rs. 125.

This is a well-planned book containing weighty papers from about twenty exponents of Indian philosophy—both in India and abroad — on certain fundamental issues. The organisers of this project had set four main questions to the contributors: What is Indian about Indian philosophy? What is the goal of Indian philosophy? What is the responsibility of the Indian philosopher? What is the future of Indian philosophy? The writers, old and young, from veterans like P. T. Raju, Kalidas Bhattacharya to Motilal and Gangadean, cover a wide range of topics and their papers are conveniently arranged in three parts: The Indian Philosophical Tradition, Tradition and Modernity, The Future of Indian Philosophy.

There is a vigorous discussion on what is *Indian* philosophy? Is it Indian because it is formed in India or is it so for any special character that reflects the Indian temperament? Another question that is raised is whether all that can be said has already been said in the scriptures and Darshanas and we can only go on repeating it. The consensus is that philosophy being an earnest enquiry into Truth, it has got to be living and moving with the times. We need to assimilate the essentials of the past tradition but also must take note of the present developments in the world and the direction of the evolving Spirit of Man.

Dr. K. N. Upadhyaya lists the following as the main features of Indian philosophy: Philosophy as the highest branch of knowledge; Synthetic approach; Cycle of the world process and the notion of infinity; Majesty of man; Introspective approach; Karma and rebirth; Combination of love for tradition and freedom of thought; Respect for life and thought; Disinterested approach to empirical science; Harmony between man and nature; Emphasis on experiential approach.

He also refers to Sri Aurobindo's amplification of the relation between philosophy and religion, so characteristic of the Indian approach.



"Philosophy is the intellectual search for the fundamental truth of things, religion is the attempt to make the truth dynamic in the soul of man. They are essential to each other; a religion that is not the expression of philosophical truth degenerates into superstition and obscurantism, and a philosophy which does not dynamise itself with the religious spirit is a barren light, for it cannot get itself practised." (P. 145)

The usual objections and criticisms by western scholars are considered in depth and effectively rebutted. Criticisms based upon a leftist bias and impatience with the weight of the past traditions on the part of some professors in India itself are examined objectively. All told, the collection is instructive, informative and stimulating.

— M. P. PANDIT

*The Philosophy of Non-Attachment* : By M. M. Agrawal. Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi-7. Price : Rs. 50.

Non-attachment is generally taken to be a negative concept. It is treated as preparatory to withdrawal from life and escape into some kind of Nirvana. The author of this thesis takes pains to emphasise that this is a positive approach promoting the development of a creative consciousness. He discusses the several views of life that have been popularised by religions and examines the connotation of Non-Attachment in their context. He argues, and rightly, that to detach oneself from situations gives one an unclouded vision and enables one to acquire freedom from the compulsions of the moment. It builds up the essentials of morality, equality and spirituality.

"The condition of mind characterized by non-attachment is a consequence of self-knowledge. For spiritual knowledge is never purely theoretical. It makes an impact upon one's way of life and transforms one's subjective consciousness. The removal of the shackles of attachment dissolves the subjective structure of one's identity. Man, then, no longer acts from the motive of self and is thus freed from its consequential sorrow. In non-attachment the expression of life is not rendered dull and insensitive, on the contrary, it makes for the experience of an inexhaustible newness."

The writer concludes that non-attachment is an optimistic philosophy. Yes, provided it is not allowed to lapse into a quietistic posture. It gives a certain release from involvements but thereafter it has to be followed up with other disciplines of conscious change at different levels of the being.

— M. P. PANDIT



*R. D. Ranade and his Spiritual Lineage*: By Vinayaka Hari Date. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Price: Rs. 65.

This book reads more like hagiology. R. D. Ranade was a philosopher of repute and became a professor, first at the Ferguson College and Deccan Education Society, but later, at the call of M. M. Ganganath Jha, Vice-Chancellor of the Allahabad University, became associated with it. While he was appointed there as professor, he actually stipulated with the authorities that his yearning to go to his spiritual preceptor, Bhausahib Maharaj, whenever he liked, should on no account be prevented by the rules of the institution. Such was his deep earnestness to walk the spiritual path of frequent Dhyaana and singing of the name of the Lord, breathed into his ear at the time of initiation from his Guru.

The author has spared no pains to trace the details of the Gurus' at whose feet Ranade started his spiritual voyage on the high seas of exalted experience of godhead. No doubt events are chronicled to show a superior power lay in him to unravel the future of those who sought him for help. They cannot be labelled as mere miracles, generally made much of in the lives of saints. The narration, though amply illustrated by happenings, has not been presented with an eye for literary writing, which is chiefly responsible for the somewhat dragging nature of the whole book. But there can be no room for readers to throw away the book as of irrelevance for the ordinary man. It has its own definite appeal to minds which seek solace in the hope of betterment whether now or hereafter.

— K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

*Some Facets of Administration*: By A. S. Naik. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Price: Rs. 30.

The author, who is a retired officer of the Indian Civil Service, has given here some of his vast experiences as an officer of the Covenanted Service both before independence and later also under the Republic of India. He does not plunge at once into his own experiences as an officer but starts with tracing the history in a sketchy manner of the ancient systems under the various dynasties such as the Mauryan, the Guptan, the Mughal and then up to the British period when the entire country came to be under almost a single head, the British Crown.

So far his own beginnings are concerned, he has, with no flourishes, provided in simple English how he was a student in Cambridge University, how later he competed for the coveted Civil Service, where he was posted early and the knowledge he gained from the work in lower positions till he naturally rose to



be Additional Secretary in Departments both in the States and at New Delhi. He has a charming way of exposing some of his own failings as well as straight dealings with people both in official spheres and the general public.

He winds up the book with more than a couple of chapters in which he has expressed his desire to find his country learn more to keep the administration clean and efficient.

On the whole, young officers with an ambition to prove the salt of their higher education could profit much in turning the pages of this interesting volume of a hundred-and-fifty pages and more.

— "SAHRIDAYA"

*Atom and the Serpent* : By Prema Nandakumar Affiliated East West Press P. Ltd., 6, Roselyn Gardens, 20/1A, Barnaby Road, Madras-10. Price: Rs 35.

This is a novel with a novelty ; for, the usual main story interest with sequence of events, inventiveness of plot, suspense element — all these are not of much assistance here to aid the reader's zest to peruse the book from start to end. Still there is no denying the fact that the reader will not rest till he has finished the volume at a stretch, which when said conclusively proves its absorbing quality. The entire three hundred odd pages here deal only with the life in an university campus, with its inmates of no less degree than the Vice-Chancellor, Principal of a college, academicians of various types, research scholars and other servants of the institution.

Nothing more exciting takes place than the arrival of an "Atom" scientist from Bombay as a visiting professor to deliver an endowment lecture in the Science Department, his stay for nearly a week, his contact with the members of the Vice-Chancellor's family and his meeting with some other professors and staff members. No doubt events such as strikes by workers at the instigation of politicians from outside, the resulting vandalism perpetrated in the wild demonstration of demolishing and felling trees and other useful materials of the institution — all contribute to the confusion caused in the campus atmosphere. The reaction to them in the household of the Vice-Chancellor, the individual concerns of people and the suspicions regarding the source of such upheavals are also described with much sense of realism.

For lack of any intricacies of plot or any introduction of sex element for appeal in the novel, the whole thing does not suffer a bit in its intrinsic quality of gripping our mind in tracing the psychological clashes among the inmates as well as the wide proliferation of university intrigues and scandals. Some of the



characters such as Rajeswar, the Sanskrit Professor, Satya, the daughter-in-law of the V. C., the irrepressible Rani, the wife of the Principal, scheming for her own promotion in service, compensate amply for the absence of the otherwise normal features of a novel to stimulate the reader. But the dialogues are kept up on a high intellectual level, appropriate to a university without at the same time palliating our involvement in the nuances of literary merit. The whole picture breathes with a wide acquaintance of every current event of the world we are living in today. References to so many movements in other parts of the world and to books which form immense fruitful sources to intellectual stimulation add to a feeling of completion in the reader.

It may require no special power of comprehension to divine the purpose of the author as mainly to expose the way modern universities in this country function with more of mere careerists for self-advancement than of students of pure pursuit of knowledge and savants of tried merit in guiding the future citizens of a country in its first steps for regeneration of enduring values.

— K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

*Temples and Legends of Himachal Pradesh*: By P.C. Roy Choudhary. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati Munshi Marg, Bombay-7. Price: Rs. 40.

Herein we have an attractive presentation from the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan to all those that are interested in Hindu temples and sculpture. History of temples of Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs located in about twenty areas, picturesque descriptions of the deities and the rituals performed therein together with the legends attached to each temple are presented here in an interesting manner. Relevant photos ornament the book. Social customs and religion of the natives are also described. Information about the languages spoken in some parts is also given. One may be interested to know that miracles do occur even now in Bagla Mukhi temple. (Ref. P. 111) The statement "It is believed to be the place where Basishta Muni, the *Guru of the Pandava* brothers, lived" — on page 52, needs clarification. This is almost a research work, and is useful not only to tourists and pilgrims but to students of Hindu and Buddhist religions and sculpture as well.

— "KASHYAPA"

*Vedic Concept of God*: By Vidyanand Saraswati. Distributors: Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi-7. Rs. 20.

In this wide-ranging discussion on the subject of God, there is a laudable attempt to reconcile the many extant notions of religions, concepts in philosophies, insights of the various sciences — physical, biological and psychological. Man's awakening to the



quest of Reality and the different formulations taken by it in the field of religion and intellectual speculation are examined at length. Though the author does not give his own conclusions on many topics like the relation of the soul to God, the dependence of the world upon God, etc., he presents the views of the prominent Indian philosophers and Acharyas and leaves the reader to form his own judgement.

On the subject of Maya, he draws upon the Vedic texts to point out that to the seers of the Veda, Maya did not at all mean a power of illusion but a divine power of creation, wielded by godheads like Indra. He discusses the question whether God has qualities or is devoid of qualities and leaves it open to the reader to accept whatever position. On the topic of Avatar, he does not admit that God manifests on earth in human form whenever there is an imperative call from below; he holds that an Avatar is a phenomenon of the human reaching the divine level and manifesting certain powers of the godhead.

The last part of the book is devoted to the role of prayer and meditation in realising the truth of God. He underlines the contribution of Patanjali in this regard and commends the principles of this Yoga to every aspirant.

The author strikes the right note while on the subject of evil and suffering. He points out that while God has certainly created the universe, he has left the working out of its processes to the free will of man and this freedom results in all kinds of turns the most glaring of which are suffering and pain.

— M. P. PANDIT

*J. Krishnamurti*: By M. V. R. Prasad. Swati Publications, Post Box No. 309, Vijayawada-2. Price: Rs. 8.

*J. Krishnamurti* is a name which is known widely throughout the world. His mind and message have been regarded as phenomenal of their unusualness. His talks and writings are found in every bookshop. Crowds gather to listen to him wherever he addresses audiences. His emphasis on human consciousness as distinct from individual consciousness and his constant plea for liberating it from the hidebounds of tradition, past, future and all scriptural and textual authorities make fresh material for free thinking. The ultimate doubt may be in some, how to liberate themselves even from the influence of J. K. in order to allow the mind freedom.

The present tiny volume in four chapters gives succinctly his teachings, then the hurdles to get over in understanding him, the introduction to a deeper analysis of his words and the last one contains practical suggestions.



The author deserves thanks for his brevity in clarifying J. K.'s entire basis of thought.

— "SAHRIDAYA"

*Sunshadow*: By Rooma Mehra. Price: Rs. 50.

*Hemispheric Transfert*: By Rosanna Rosini. Price: Rs. 40.

*Iris in Dark Water*: By Christine Krishnasami. Price: Rs. 20.

*Poems and Plays*: By Suma Josson. Price: Rs. 25.

All the books are published by Writers Workshop, Calcutta-45.

These tiny "Writers Workshop" lamps set sail on "the surging deluge of literature" by anxious women poets with the faith of the Kartik month: Ah! will at least one continue to float for as long as a dozen decades? We sigh at the obvious display of wasted talent itching for printed publicity in the form of "Indian English" verse — the deceptive whirlpool!

Marked by indifferent workmanship, Rooma Mehra's *Sunshadow* fails for want of proper subjects as well. The flicker of promise "On Seeing My Teacher Again" fades into the nothingness of "The Pessimist," "Impasse" and "Sunshadow." Rosanna Rosini's book cannot be easily dismissed since there is an attempt to interlock meaningfully an exile's experiences of Trieste and Australia. Simple expressions hoop together to form a memorable poem or two:

"Periwinkle procession  
of dreams  
Swarming in the night streets  
awaiting private messages  
from Neverland."

*Iris in Dark Water* is firmly grounded on Christian theology. Culled from poems written in all kinds of experimentation over a period of three decades, the selection shows Christine Krishnasami at her best. Often a delicious refreshment, the lyrics are touched by the transparency of a sincere soul that calls upon the evening star to

"Shine on lonely cottages  
where all thy light is felt;  
Shine on aching heart, my star  
Till all its ache should melt."

Drawing sustenance from a landscape of imposing sky-scrapers and elegant porcelain bathrooms, Suma Josson's "poems" try to recall past experiences of her youth among the mountains and meadows. "The Silhouette," a play, is a smog of irritations and depressions, for no one is at home anywhere and everything is menacingly bizarre. "In the Rain," another play, is a damp squib. There is an uncertain fire about Suma's poems and plays which is



intriguing and disconcerting. She would do well to concentrate on characters in action instead of getting involved in stage-directions and sentimental mist. Suma Josson has real talent, but it is yet to be minted into literary art that truly bounces the reader.

— Dr. PREMA NANDAKUMAR

#### SAMSKRIT—ENGLISH

*Dhvanyaloka*: By Anandavardhana. Text with translation and notes by Dr. K. Krishna Murthy. Motilal Banarsidas, Bungalow Road, Delhi-7. Price: Rs. 50.

Theory of “Dhvani” or suggestion, which states that suggestion is the quintessence of poetry and Rasa is its soul, propounded by Anandavardhana in the 9th century A. D., in his monumental work *Dhvanyaloka*, still reigns supreme in the field of literary criticism in Samskrit. This theory, like the philosophic system of Advaita, assimilates into itself the main elements of other theories, and provides berths for all of them. It is heartening to note that even modern western critics are recognising this theory. A critical edition of this text, together with a good translation and notes in English, is a long-felt want, and this edition, brought out by an eminent Professor of Samskrit, who was working on this project for more than ten years, meets the demand. This is the second (revised) edition. New manuscripts are collated and many improved readings are given herein. A detailed introduction discusses text readings, problems of authorship, title of the text, and literary theory taking the researches done up-to-date. Copious notes discuss many knotty problems (cf. Pp. 310-311). Comparison of western critics’ opinions with this theory is another salient feature (cf. Pp. 312-313, 329, 335, 354-59). A glossary of technical words and all the necessary indexes are provided. A brilliant introduction by Prof. K. R. Srinivasa Iyyengar adorns the edition.

The word “chinvanti” is translated as “will gather,” and “shatakritvas” as “for the hundredth time.” Many similar translations are there. Translation of verses and Karikas may also be improved, but as it is not intended to be a literal translation completely, and as it conveys the original ideas, we have nothing to remark against it. This edition is highly helpful to all post-graduate students and teachers as well.

— B. K. SASTRY

*Bhattikavyam*: By Dr. M. A. Karandikar and Mrs. S. Karandikar. Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi - 7.

In their introduction to the work the authors make it clear that Bhatti, the author of this poem, is not the same as Bhartrihari as is



made out by some writers. He seems to have lived before the seventh century A. D. This work is an epic biography of Sri Rama so designed as to illustrate many of the *Sutras* of Panini, the grammarian. "The Bhattikavya has been planned on a double level, narrative (*lakshya*) and illustrative (*lakshana*). On the narrative plane, it deals with the life of Rama in twenty-two cantos. The illustrative plane is concerned with illustrating most of the important *Sutras* of Panini. It is divided into four *Kandas*: miscellaneous rules (cantos 1-4); leading rules (cantos 5-9); rhetorics (cantos 10-13) and verbal formations, tenses and moods (cantos 14-22)." The study of the authors proceeds on these two levels, viz., critical appreciation and grammatical analysis.

There is an interesting comparison between the work of Bhatti (1650 verses) and that of Valmiki (24,000). Bhatti is direct and brief; he does not digress, does not philosophise. He has been a model for many other writers, especially in his handling of the grammar aspect, the most notable being Magha in his *Sisupalavadha*.

The Samskrit verses and their translations into English appear on the same page and facilitate the reading. The renderings are accurate and readable. The index of the verses at the close adds to the utility of the work.

— M. P. PANDIT

#### SAMSKRIT

*Vedanta Darshanam - Acharya Vaachaspati Misraascha*: By R. Muthukrishna Shastry. Hita Bhaashini Publications, 66 North Street, Tiruvanai Koil, Trichy - 5. Price: Rs. 3.

Vaachaspati Misra, a versatile genius, in his commentary named "Bhaamati" on Sri Shankara's *Brahmasutra Bhashya*, founded a tradition (*Prasthaana*) of his own, as against that of Padmapada known as *Vivaranaprasthaana*. This booklet under review, written by an eminent scholar in Advaita and Mimamsa, and a recipient of President's Award for Samskrit, presents clearly all the distinctive views of this tradition with the authority of relevant citations from *Bhamati* and *Kalpataru* also. Other outstanding features of the commentary and brief life-sketch of Vaachaspati Misra are also given. Any reader of this brochure is sure to be enlightened and feasted and will be naturally induced for a deep study of *Bhamati*.

— B. K. SASTRI

#### HINDI

*Pravara*: By Vaddiparti Chalapati Rao. Published by Bharati Bharati Prakashan. Copies can be had of G. Krishna Mohan, Punnammathota, Vijayawada-520 010. Price: Rs. 12.

This is a poem stated to be a translation of Allasani Peddana's *Swarochisha Manusambhavam* (popularly known as *Manucharitra*)



This is the first volume (of the whole work) dealing with the romance of Varudhini, the celestial damsel, and Pravara, the handsome yet righteous Brahmin of Varanasi. The latter transported himself to the holy Himalayas by the special ointment given to him by a visiting godman. And there in the beautiful mountain valley he was encountered by the damsel, who, at first sight, had an ardent desire for the winsome man but whose lust was unrequited by his rectitude and character. The ointment on the feet of the Brahmin was washed away unnoticed because of melting ice at noontide. But by the virtue of the power of Fire God whom he invoked, he retransported himself to his native town.

This is a very popular and romantic story in Telugu literature and constitutes an entity in itself. The effort of the translator is noteworthy for he is conveying the beauteous romance to the Hindi reader, and for the enrichment of Hindi literature.

We agree with Dr. I. Panduranga Rao, who, in his nine-page preface, says that the author has very well-grasped the poetic genius of the original. The work is, in fact, not just a literal translation but may be said to be a literary adaptation, for there is an enchanting dilation here, a conducive condensation there to suit and enhance the romantic content of the poem. As already said, this book is only Canto I of the planned whole. The Hindi idiom is natural and well-maintained so as to conceal the art of translation/adaptation. The poetic rhythm is well-nigh satisfactory. It is hoped that the other two parts also will see the light of day before long.

— KOTA S. R. SARMA

#### TELUGU

*Swarna Kamalalu*: By Smt. Illindala Saraswati Devi. For copies Author, 2-2-1118-1/2, New Nallakunta, Hyderabad-44.  
Price: Rs. 80.

This collection of Telugu short stories is perhaps unique in that it contains 100 short stories selected and compiled from the writings of a single writer, written during a literary career stretching from 1945 to 1980, and published in well-known Telugu journals, and some also broadcast from A I R. Perhaps no other short story writer in Andhra has so far brought out his or her one hundred stories in one volume and it is not known whether any other Indian language story writer has such a publication to his credit. This collection also enjoys the distinction of winning the awards of both the Sahitya Akademi (The National Academy of Letters, New Delhi) and the Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Akademi in one and the same year, 1982, the former adjudging it as the best work in



the Telugu language for that year, and the latter selecting it as the best short story collection.

Srimati Saraswati Devi is a self-made writer. She was once well-known for her weekly feature articles in largely-circulated journals which discussed the problems confronting women in the modern society.

This collection presents a variety of stories depicting both urban and rural life, but mostly urban middle-class life, and the urbanity is strikingly significant. The base of Saraswati Devi's themes is real life as is evident from the problems and the issues she has dealt with in these stories, such as the feudal set-up, the class distinctions, the evil of dowry, inter-caste marriages, the Hindu-Muslim relations, love in its various facets, the psychological aspects especially the child psychology, the human aspirations and finally the yearnings of the individual souls. But in this realistic base, the writer not unconsciously brings in the idealism and the result is a happy blend of the two. An instance of this trend is the story entitled "Kani Kalam Vaste..." (When bad days overtake ...) in which the pitiable plight of a Muslim family having fallen on bad days in the aftermath of a feudal epoch is depicted. The immediate problem of the family is marrying off the two daughters. Normally persons placed in such a situation resort to the solution suggested by one of the sons, which is typical of the feudal set-up. But the writer very boldly does away with such practices and allows the girls to have their own way and the course charted for them is certainly befitting the changed times as well as their honour.

Likewise, Saraswati Devi's emphasis is on the man and woman as a unit in the sphere of married life for perfect emotional integration so that the two may lead an integrated life with complete understanding. The writer's stress is on harmony in life and amity between various communities. In the stories that mainly deal with human psychology, the writer does not adopt any set psychological formulae, but goes to the basic human nature which is beyond the confines of time, place and people.

As regards the art and craft of the short story, Saraswati Devi is aware of the various techniques, but follows her own pattern uninfluenced by any trend. There is a proper beginning, a developed middle and a logical ending, necessary for the theme in all these stories. And a noteworthy feature of these stories is that the narration is nowhere in the first person, and that is perhaps the reason the writer is not conspicuous with her presence, and hence no sidelights and no interfering with the course of the



narration of the story. Of course, when compared to the present day fast way of writing, these stories look leisurely. But then these stories reflect the times which were not so fast and hence not so mechanical as of now, but still they had their own tumults and turmoils, trials and tribulations and pains and privations as they formed the base for the take-off to a crowded bristling stage in the life of our society.

— D. RAMALINGAM

*Laghukaumudi Maargadarshini*: By S. Raghunatha Sharma. For copies Smt. S. Rajeswari, B-4, P. G. Centre quarters, Sri Venkateswarapuram P. O. Anantapur. Price: First Part Rs. 15. Second Part: Rs. 10.

A knowledge of fundamentals of Samskrit grammar in all its aspects is essential for a proper understanding of Kavyas and other Shastras in Samskrit and Telugu Kavyas also. *Laghukaumudi* in Samskrit, an abridged version of *Siddhanta-kaumudi*, is of immense help in this direction. But that is not easily understandable to students not knowing Samskrit. Even students of Samskrit cannot study and understand it without the proper guidance of a teacher. With these two volumes in hand a Telugu student of ordinary intelligence and equipment can acquire a good knowledge of Samskrit grammar.

Original Sutras and Vartikas are given. Anuvritti and Adhikaara are shown. Word for word meaning of the Sutra in its completed form is given. Then follows a detailed explanation with ordinary illustrations. Meanings of all technical words are explained in full. In Sandhis, all the steps are given pointing out the relevant Sutras also. Every section has an introduction which explains the significance of almost all the technical terms (Paanchamika). The contents of each section are reviewed at the end thereof.

First part contains sections on Samjna, Sandhi, Kridanta, Vibhaktyardha and Samaasa. Taddhitas and Stripratyayas are given in the second volume. Chapters on Nouns and Verbs are omitted.

But as far as these two volumes are concerned, they serve as a very good teacher. We commend the author. A table showing the Krit Pratyayas, Taddhita Pratyayas, their meanings and illustrations of final forms, and the "It-Samjnas" and their purpose with illustrations, will make the book ready referencers.

—B.KUTUMBA RAO

*Vyaasa Rachana Suchi*: Compiled by N. S. Krishnamurty.

Price: Rs. 100.

*Andhra Mahabharata Nighantuvu*: By A. Suryanarayana.

Price: Rs. 35.



*Tikkana Pada-Prayoga Kosamu*: 3rd Volume. Edited by A. Ramakrishna Rao, B. Krishnamurty and D.V. Avadhani. Price Rs. 100.

All the books are published by Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Akademi, Saifabad, Hyderabad-4.

The Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Akademi is doing signal and yeoman service to research scholars, linguists and lexicographers in Telugu in particular by publishing the three volumes under review.

The first volume is an index of essays and articles on different topics published in 94 Telugu journals and in some souvenirs also published during 1875-1972. Subjects of the essays, etc., are classified under 72 main divisions, beginning with Arthashastra and ending with Sahityamu. Of these the last 34 are devoted mainly to Sahitya under different heads as Sahityamu — Tikkana and Sahityamu—Nannaya, etc. All in all, there are 26,880 entries. Title of the essay, writer, name of the journal, and the year and month of its publication are given in each entry. This is a very good ready referencer to almost all essays, etc., and it saves much of the time and energy of Telugu students and scholars alike. We compliment Sri Krishnamurty for having undertaken this hard job and completed it successfully.

*Andhra Mahabharata Nighantuvu* is a highly useful dictionary of words used in the *Andhra Mahabharata*. It contains mainly all the words used by Tikkana, words not used by Tikkana but used by Nannaya, and words not used by either of the above but used by Errana. Nature of the word, that is, whether it is a noun, verb, adjective or indeclinable, its gender, whether it is a Desya, Tadbhava or Tatsama, if it is a verb whether it is transitive or intransitive, etc., is indicated. Meaning or many meanings that the words denote are given. Relevant passages where those words with those meanings occur are quoted. Detailed explanation of the meanings of some words are given. Necessary allusions are also included of Antaryaaga, Udanam and Uluchi.

A complete verse explaining some symbolic terms is also elaborately commented upon—cf. 'Okati'. Wherever necessary, grammatical notes are given. Sometimes derivations or source words are also pointed out. Different readings, if any, are shown. Wherever necessary passages from *Sanskrit Mahabharata*, *Amarakosha* and other works are also quoted. An onerous project is worked upon by a single person with unceasing zeal for years together, and herein we have the fruits of his hard labour. Our hearty commendations go to him.

*Tikkana Pada-Prayoga Kosamu*: This work edited by three eminent Telugu scholars, authorities in their own fields, is



highly useful for a historical study of Telugu language in all its aspects. This volume contains words beginning from 'Da' and ending with words beginning with 'Ha', with their various inflexional forms. Sentences containing those forms of words in Tikkana's *Bharatam* are quoted. Principles followed in editing this work are indicated in the beginning.

All these three volumes should necessarily be made available all good libraries. — B. KUTUMBA RAO

*Vasantavallari*: By Varanasi Venkata Rao. Prasanti Publishers, Punnammathota, Vijayawada - 10. Price: Rs. 5.

*Vasantavallari* (Spring-Creeper) is a collection of seventy-six sprightly poems of undeniable lyrical grace and beauty. Though this is the very first lyrical effusion of the poet, there is a mastery of language and rhythm clearly discernible everywhere, which vouches bright future for the poet. Much of the freshness of these lyrics is due to the happy choice of colloquial rhythms and folk style. Some of the pieces, including two operas, are meant for children. Nature, patriotism and elegaic sentiments are themes for other lyrics. There is a pleasing lightness of touch which imparts a bird-like quality to his poetry. Pieces like *Cheeralu* (Saris) remind us of the art of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the Nightingale of India. Though the poet drew his inspiration from stalwarts like Basavaraju, Bapiraju, Krishna Sastry, Karunasri and others, the voice is unmistakably his own.

— Dr. G. SRIRAMA MURTHY

*Sri Devibhagavatam—Cantos 1 to 5: Parts 1 and 2*: By Pudi Venkata Ramaiah. For copies: P. Sivakumar, 486, Kondamitta, Srikalahasti-517 644. Price: Rs. 15 each.

"Devibhagavatam" is a masterpiece of Vyasa's contribution to Indian literature. It was written in Samskrit originally. There were 18,000 verses in twelve cantos. They deal with the various Puranic stories of this country. They are told through Suta to Saunaka and others at Naimisaranya. All the stories are interwoven with the gospel truth of Advaita. The entire book is a description of both matter and energy. Matter is symbolically analysed in the shape of stories and spirit is laid with particular emphasis. They are stories in outward appearance and science in meaning. The trio of Indian gods Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara are the cabinet ministers of the Prime Minister, the Universal Mother, Rajarajeswari.

Sri Pudi Venkata Ramaiah the scholar-poet has rendered the original into lucid and readable Telugu prose. He has described dynasties of Bharata Vamsa making the reader to understand without any difficulty. The whole visible universe is the symbol



of Mother Parvati, the Moolaprakriti, in its three manifestations of Mahakali, Mahasaraswati and Mahalakshmi. The three are the symbols of Tamasik, Rajasik and Satwik aspects of nature in manifestation. This is creation. While describing the spiritual meaning behind each Avatara, particularly Rama and Krishna, the author has taken meticulous care in bringing out the spiritual revelations behind them. The author has done a commendable job and we hope he will bring out the remaining cantos also in due course.

— M. S. SARMA

## BOOKS RECEIVED

*The Message of the Bhagavad Gita to Combat Crisis of Character :*  
By Dr. D. Arka Somayaji. Published by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati. Price: Re. 1

*The Lotus that Lasts* (A commentary on Sri Lakshmi Ashtottara Satanaama Stotram): By Dr. I Panduranga Rao. Published by Sri Vishnu Sahasranaama Satsangam, Ramakrishnapuram, New Delhi-22.

*Iham-Param* (Kathopanishad rendered into Telugu Verse):  
By Dr. I. Panduranga Rao. International Telugu Institute, Hyderabad-7. Price: Rs. 4.

*Pitroonamu* (Telugu): By Kona Venkata Subbaraya Sarma, Z. P. High School, Cherukuru, Prakasam District, A. P.

*Jagadguru Bodhalu* Vol. 10 (Telugu): Sadhana Grandha Mandal, Tenali. Price: Rs. 8.

*Bhagavatarasam* (Telugu): By Hari Ramanath. Sri Venkateswara Bhakta Samajam, Narsapur.

*Auchitya Vichaara Charchaa : Kavikanthaabharanam : Suvritta Tilakamu* of Kshemendra with Telugu commentary.  
Price: Rs. 21.

*Kavyalankara Sutrani* with Telugu commentary. Both by Dr. P. Sri Ramachandrudu, R-33, Osmania University Campus, Hyderabad-7. Price: Rs. 15.



# TRIVENI

**JOURNAL OF INDIAN RENAISSANCE**

**Founded in 1928**

**Vol. 53 No. 2**

**July - September 1984**

*Founded by*

**K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAO**

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**Annual Subscription**

**Rs. 35-00**

**Single Copy**

**Rs. 10-00**

**TRIVENI PUBLISHERS Pvt., Ltd.**

**MACHILIPATNAM - 521 001**

**Andhra Pradesh**



## INFORMATION ABOUT 'TRIVENI'

'TRIVENI' is published during April, July, October and January — a new Volume commencing in April, every year. Subscriptions may begin with any Number but no enlistment will be made for periods of less than a year.

### RATES OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

	<i>Surface Mail</i>	<i>Air Mail</i>
India and Sri Lanka	Rs. 35	—
Burma and Pakistan	55	Rs. 75
Other Asian Countries	55	75
North America	US \$ 12	US \$ 20
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Australia	A \$ 8	A \$ 15
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INTENDING SUBSCRIBERS are requested to remit the annual subscription in advance. A specimen copy of the current number can always be had on payment of Rs. 10-00 (Post free), and on enlistment the balance of Rs. 25-00 only need be paid to make up the subscription for the year.

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*Padma ( the Lotus ) represents the purity of Love, Jyoti ( the Flame ) the light of Wisdom, and Vajra ( the Thunderbolt of Indra ) the splendour of Power.*



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EDITED, PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY BHAVARAJU NARASIMHA RAO  
AT THE TRIVENI PRESS, MACHILIPATNAM - 521 001



## TRUTH AND FREEDOM \*

J. KRISHNAMURTI

[ Mr. Krishnamurti gave brief addresses over the Radio at the invitation of the Broadcasting Stations in several cities visited by him during his travels in the U. S. A., and Canada in 1932. The reports of these talks have been grouped together and are printed here. ]

Most people are trying to seek physical, mental or emotional comfort. Now I say that wherever there is the pursuit of satisfaction, there is a narrowing down of thought and emotion, which brings about a mediocrity of outlook on life. Our whole structure of thought and civilisation has been based on the search for consolation, for satisfaction, whereas from my point of view, the search after comfort cannot bring understanding, and in understanding alone is there the realisation of intense living.

In seeking comfort there is continual conformity, and, therefore, dependence on another, on one's neighbour or friend, so that, as an individual, one becomes incapable of thinking truly. There is a continual imitation, and in this effort to adapt one's own mind to a particular ideal, there cannot be completeness of thought, because one does not think through, one is all the time being hindered by circumstances, by society, by tradition. Most people thus live in this continual state of fear through conformity.

To me, where there is conformity, there is death; where there is compromise, there is mediocrity, stagnation and slow decay; whereas if one thinks intensely and completely, irrespective of tradition, or habit, the mind frees itself from this idea of fear, and, therefore, there is no longer the search for security, whether physical or mental or emotional, whether for our existence in this world or in another.

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Now you are held within the walls of the prison of your own fashioning, and you look to aid from without, but no one can help you, or give you the strength, to free yourself from the walls that enclose you, except yourself. So being prisoners of want and craving, we are all the time concerned about what is Truth, what is God or Light. We can know this only when we are out of the prison. Yet we do not, in our intensity of suffering, break down the walls, which we have created by ourselves, so what we do is merely to imagine what a spiritual life would be. Thus we merely bring the idea into the prison but we do not break down the walls. It is only by breaking down the illusions created through want, through craving, that we rid the mind of the idea of distinctions, so that there is no longer a struggle.

I say therefore do not assume anything. Do not struggle to imagine what a perfect Life, or what Truth, must be; but become aware of the fact that you are the creator of your own prison, and in facing that fact, in recognising that through your own cravings, through your desire for accumulation of a multitude of things, or of knowledge, you create the prison that holds you. Where there is craving there must be struggle for achievement, and the achievement, as it were, withers in your hand, because in the very moment of gratification or fulfilment it has already lost its significance and is discarded. And thus continues a ceaseless struggle.

So, in order to understand truly this ceaseless struggle without meaning, and be free of it, become conscious that you are a prisoner, and then you, as an individual, will step out of this prison, which is this so-called civilisation, based on selfishness, this monstrous structure which has been raised through the centuries.

And it is only through becoming aware that you and no one else are the creator of the walls of the prison which holds you, and becoming fully conscious of your actions, which are the result of your thoughts and feelings, that you can destroy the prison. And when the mind is free and no longer bound by a personal idea or the limitation of personal affection, there comes harmony and the quietude of living intensity. Then alone you will know that which is Eternal.

So, do not seek the Eternal, but become aware in the present of the cause of suffering, and in that flame of awareness you will know the freedom of harmony, which is Truth.

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I am going to try to explain what seems to me the most important and natural attitude of life. One's thinking and one's



actions are at present conditioned, limited by social, economic and religious ideas, and one has become merely a cog in a vast machine. One is not responsible or certain, and out of that uncertainty and irresponsibility one's actions are all the time disharmonious and in conflict. And where there is conflict in thinking and feeling, and therefore in action, there follows sorrow, and most people in the world, the thoughtless and the clever alike, are caught up in sorrow.

To be free of that sorrow one must become conscious that one is but imitating, that one's feeling and thinking are merely the result of continual conformity to established ideals and standards which one follows blindly. And thereby one's true instinct has been perverted.

Now, we cannot trust our instinct, because throughout these many centuries instinct has been perverted by public opinion, by tradition, by spiritual authority, and so on. Our own instinct which is our true guide, has been thus ruthlessly perverted, and hence we have naturally lost all confidence in it. So, once again to discover pure instinct, we must begin to see how our thoughts and feelings are conditioned through fear, through imitation; and in truly facing those limitations imposed by society and religion, through the many standards and ideals, we shall release the natural intelligence which is intuition, which is true instinct.

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What I am saying is not in any way philosophical, nor is it Western or Oriental thought expressed to suit modern minds, because to me philosophy, that is, a system of thought, merely limits the freedom of feeling and thinking and brings about a conformity, and imitation. I am not in any way offering a remedy or a panacea to the world's existing ills, nor giving you a system whereby you can find happiness.

Throughout the world, everyone is seeking happiness, the happiness which endures, but such happiness is not to be found through conformity of any kind. Conformity, which is imitation, begins from childhood, through education, through the impact of society, and of external circumstances. Thus we tend to make our thoughts and our feelings correspond to public opinion and subserve religious ideas, or spiritual authority.

If you consider any philosophy or religion, you will find in it a method laid down, whereby one can come to the realisation of Truth or God. All that we do is to conform, imitate and force our thinking and our feeling into the particular mould of that system, and thus we merely become cogs in a social or religious machine. Our whole structure of modern civilisation is based



entirely on conformity and adjustment to standards which have been laid down by an authority, the authority of public opinion or of a spiritual teacher. And as with church, society, worship and ideals, so it is with education: continual conformity results in the suffocation of individual thinking.

But what happens in actual Life? We have an experience — death, or failure in business or a great disillusionment — and that experience makes us suffer; forces us to think. So, faced by conflict, confusion and misery, we break away from conformity, from imitation in which there lies insecurity, falseness and we begin to think for ourselves, thus increasing the conflict. Now when this happens, what do we do? We seek a way to conquer that conflict, that sorrow, not by understanding the cause, but by seeking a means of escape, and we establish an ideal and we hope by means of that ideal to forget the conflict.

So, from conformity one awakens to conflict, and from conflict one escapes to a satisfaction, a consolation, which is again a limitation, and thus one is bound to this process of continual escape from the present, in which alone is Immortality. I say that there is understanding of the present, not in conforming to the memory of the past or by pursuit of an ideal in the future, but in the continual awareness which reveals all conflicts; in facing them and not in trying to escape from them. To face them is to become aware that the cause of suffering will exist so long as there is the pursuit of craving, which is different from need. It is in the intensity of living in the present without the hindrance of conformity or escape, that there comes an ecstasy, an everlasting happiness which to me is the blessedness of Truth.

*Question* : What have you to say as regards religion and philosophy as educative factors in the life of an individual? How far, according to you, is religion of any value to the understanding of Truth? Is religious leadership compatible with true spirituality? What is your conception of God?

*Krishnamurti* : To me, religion or philosophy is a system to mould a mind. I say that Truth cannot be found through a system, through a guide. Religion cannot show the path to Truth, because Truth of God or Life, whatever be the name we give this Reality, can only be realised through individual awareness. Religion and philosophy but superimpose the ideas of others on our minds and thereby dull and cripple our thoughts. They set up ideals and standards to which we continually try to conform. Because our thought is conditioned by tradition, by imitation, by fear, our action also must be limited, and therefore out of that action



there springs sorrow. It is only through the intense awareness of mind and heart, through the clear perception of thought, that we can come to the freedom from sorrow and to the realisation of that which is eternal.

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As I have said, Truth cannot be realised through any organised form of thought. You have perhaps heard the story of how the devil and a friend were walking one day, and they saw a man ahead pick up something, look at it intently, and put it in his pocket. The friend asked the devil, "What was it that he picked up?" and the devil replied, "Oh! he picked up a bit of Truth." The friend said, "That's very bad business for you, then, isn't it?" and the devil replied, "Oh! no, I shall get him to organise it."

One cannot organise Truth because realisation is purely an individual matter. Where mind and heart are pursuing a system and are not entirely relying on their own strength, on their own integrity, there must then be confusion in one's life.

And so, an organised system of thought, a spiritual authority, is to me the utter denial of Truth, because Truth, the godhead of understanding, cannot be realised through a system or through another. No one can save man except himself and this is the greatness of man, that in himself, in his own fullness of action, lies the realisation of Truth.

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If you were to ask a Hindu, a Christian, a Buddhist, a Muhammadan or a Hebrew to describe God, each of them will try to give expression to his particular conception. That is, each one will contrive to give shape to God in accordance with his particular fancy, his particular predilection or prejudice.

Now, God or Life or Truth cannot be conceived and described. If you had never seen the sea, and some one were to come and describe it to you, you could but imagine it but your idea cannot convey the reality to you. Likewise, being limited, being finite and conditioned, you try to imagine the immeasurable, the indescribable. Like a prisoner who craves for liberty, begins to imagine and worship the beauty, the ecstasy, the majesty of freedom, but does not break down the walls that hold him prisoner, so does man toy with the conception of God, of that Reality, through the prison bars of his limitations.

Now I say that there is immortality, that there is eternity of which I know, but it cannot be grasped by the mind in limitation. So I say, do not concern yourself about it, but rather



concern yourself with the present with which you live, with the conflict, the cruelty, and the suffering of everyday incidents. Thus when you begin to free the mind and heart from this limitation, from this illusion from this prison of sorrow of many centuries, you will know for yourself that everlasting eternity called Life or God or Truth. Therefore live with intensity in the present, for in the present alone is eternity. Immortality is not in a distant future, and the concern about your individual destiny is but vain effort. In the present is the godhead of understanding which is supreme intelligence.

*Question :* The whole world is at present passing through a very critical phase. There is acute economic crisis throughout the world, under a darkened political firmament. To what cause or causes would you attribute this state of affairs, and what remedy would you suggest ?

*Krishnamurti :* We desire to solve our economic difficulties by a miracle. We have built up a system through centuries, based on competition and selfishness. Now, we must aim not at the substitution of one system for another, but at a complete re-orientation of our minds and hearts. We have set up innumerable authorities, as religions, teachers, gods, for our worship. Individually in the field of thought, therefore, we have become as lambs ; but with regard to work for our living, like so many wolves.

It is of the utmost importance that we go to the root of the problem. That is, in the field of thinking and feeling we must not set up another as a guide, but be integrally alone, whereas in work we must plan together collectively for our living. Therein lies the remedy ; it is by the expression of individuality in its rightful place that you can find freedom, which is Truth ; and in the realisation of that Truth you will solve your social and economic problems. By merely trimming the branches of the tree you will not solve your troubles, but if you properly nourish the roots, the branches will be healthy and abundant. So work for the change of heart and mind individually and then these problems will solve themselves.

The present civilisation has been based on agreed and individual competition and therefore cannot last for ever, because it has no intrinsic value. At present the individual who is the outcome of our present civilisation, has been caught up in accumulation which is his sole incentive ; that is, the individual has tried to express his ambition and attain his desired social position through the accumulation of wealth and power. He has therefore set up social distinctions, and hence a civilisation as



it is, which is based on utter ruthless selfishness, must eventually break down. It is merely a matter of time.

As long as we have this conception of individuality, based on selfishness and greed, no civilisation, no structure built on it can last long, nor can it free the mind from sorrow.

Up till now spiritually we have been slaves; that is, we have followed, we have imitated, we have set up spiritual authorities, and tradition has bound our minds. No matter to which country we belong, there is, I am afraid, everywhere a constant adjustment towards a tradition. In thought and emotion, as individuals we have merely conformed, while in the world of action we have lived utterly for ourselves, selfishly, in the pursuit of our own security. As I said, I am not giving you a panacea, but from my point of view, only when we understand the right function of individuality, is there a way out of this chaos. To me, individuality can be expressed only in the world of thought, not in the world of existence; that is, we must think intensely for ourselves, untrammelled by tradition, by habit, or by the fear of public opinion. But in order to secure the needs for our existence, we must co-operate, work and plan together; that is, we must get rid of this idea of nationality, flags and frontiers, and thereby we shall come to solve the economic problem through a human point of view not through national or separative prejudices.

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When society is built on selfishness, on ruthless competition, when one fights another for security for himself, as in the structure of our present civilisation, then that social order must eventually collapse. Man, through his possessive craving, has built up what he calls a civilisation. To that world he clings, and naturally a structure based on continual want, on continual achievement of successive heights of empty nothingness, must eventually crumble.

Now, what is the remedy?

There is no world panacea. We can individually, and therefore collectively, see the basic cause, and individually, and therefore collectively, step out of that system which is its inevitable product.

In the world of action, man, as an individual, has become ruthlessly aggressive in his desire for possessions, in his search for security. He has used his mind for his selfish cravings.

Now, I say that one must think utterly for oneself, and be free of all imitation; that one must maintain one's individuality in its integrity in thought and feeling; thereby alone can there



be the spontaneity of true co-operation in the world of action, in the collective work for the benefit of all.

In seeking that which is eternal, there is true work for all, based on human needs, not on human greed and exploitation. And, when you, as an individual, break down this narrowness of patriotism, nationality, flag-waving and war, when you, as an individual, cease to be an exploiter, through your strength and through your selfish cleverness, then will come to you the peace, the understanding, for which you now grope in vain.

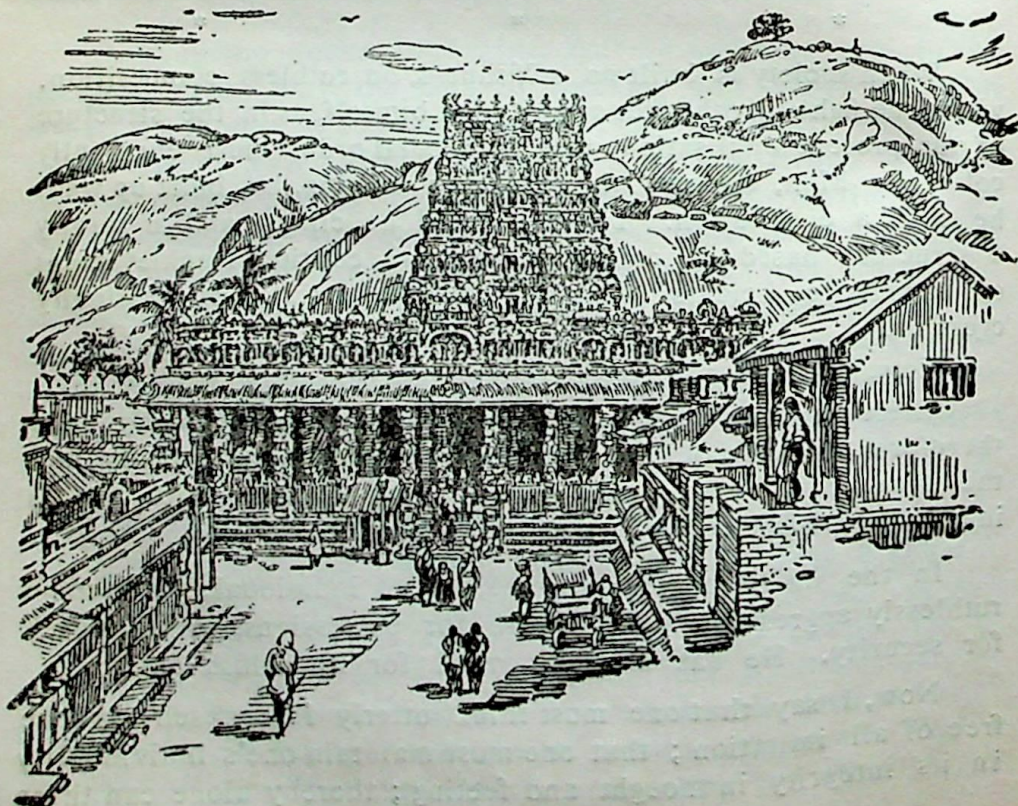
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When you are no longer a cog in the machine of society where you exploit and are exploited, when you, the individual, do not abandon yourself to authority, when you free yourself from all traditions which cripple your mind and heart, when you cease to look for happiness, for Truth, through another, then you will become utterly responsible in action and thus will create an understanding of life, based on Truth and Freedom.

— Reprinted from *Triveni*, Jan. — Feb. 1933





## The Song Immortal

HONAJI BALA

[ This morning song is very popular in Maharashtra for more than sixteen or seventeen decades. In accordance with tradition, Honaji Bala, the son of a milkman, successfully sang devotional songs of this nature at a time when lesser compositions like *Lavnees* and *Tamashas* were popular. ]

Thou, Beautiful as the Blue Cloud, O, Lord of Lakshmi, it is the  
break of day !

Wake up, Thou Lord of Forests ! The Sun is up on eastern hills.

Thou, Beautiful as the Blue Cloud, O, Lord of Lakshmi ...

O, Lord of Joy ! It is the break of day ; Awake from thy pleasant  
sleep of night.

The cows keep lowing with their pregnant udders trickling milk ;  
In tens and thousands run the calves to suck the udders of the cows.  
Wake up, Thou Lord of Forests ! ... ..

In the evening-hour, flocks of birds settle to rest on tree-tops  
And at break of day they fly away in search of food.

In the morning tens and thousands fill their *kavdees*\* with  
drinking water.

The *Gopis* tidy the floor and decorate it with *rangolees*.†

With earthen pots poised on their hips

They go the banks of Yamuna, O, Mukunda ! and have their  
morning rice and curds.

Thou, Beautiful as the Blue Cloud, O, Lord of Lakshmi ... ..

The splendour of a million Suns lights your face.

I, Honaji, daily tell the beads of your name, in my heart.

Wake up, Thou Lord of Forests ! The Sun is up on eastern hills.

\* a device adopted by Indians to carry water-pots.

† a popular house-hold decoration of Maharashtra.

— Translated from Marathi by V. V. Tonpe



## Indian Renaissance — National Awakening

S. S. PUJARI and S. S. NARAYANA

Lexicons call Renaissance "new birth." The European Renaissance which started in Italy in the 16th century signified the birth of Modern Europe. Similarly, the Indian Renaissance which began in the early phase of the 19th century resulted in the birth of modern India. The question, however, arises: What exactly do we mean by the birth of Modern India?

The land, rivers, mountains, seas, etc., of the country remain what they have always been: they neither die nor are they born anew. The national habits, folkways, culture, religion, etc., of the people also continue to be almost alike; so also the general composition of the Indian people. Or we can say, amidst certain invariable changes there is a deep underlying continuity.

What, then, is it which can be said to have been newly-born with the advent of the so-called renaissance?

What is called renaissance or new birth in India is nothing other than the awakening of the mind, soul or psyche of the nation after a long or short span of sleep; it is the galvanising into creative activity of the dormant life-force of the national spirit. It may be described as a renewal of the national springs of life when they seemed all but choked and about to dry up. It is the emergence and unhampered functioning of the free and creative spirit of the country. To realise the significance of this statement we must bear in mind that every nation, like each individual, has in it a creative principle which is always seeking to convert its potentialities into actualities. India, too, possesses a creative force. We may call it "spirituality."

### How Renaissance began in India

The Indian Renaissance begins with the Modern Period. And the Modern Period starts with the British domination in India.



The British rule brought political unity to India which she was lacking for centuries. It also brought with it a new and expanding religion, a different culture and civilisation which has had enormous impact on the life and mind of the people of India.

Raja Ram Mohun Roy, generally acclaimed as the prophet of the Indian renaissance or Indian awakening or Indian nationalism, took up the task of the study of English language and literature immediately after starting his crusade against idolatry, polytheism and Sati. In other words, his movement for the reform of Hinduism and his call to his countrymen to go back to the teachings of the Upanishads antedate his familiarity with English literature and Western ideas.

This important fact leads us to assert that the impact of the West could at best be the occasion for the birth of the national awakening, but definitely not a veracause. On the contrary, the spirit of India was awakening the minds of a number of eminent persons to raise India from its deep slumber and recovering its spiritual heritage, although in some form or other the impact of the West cannot be ignored to this effect.

#### **The British Impact (negative aspect)**

The important fact to be noted is that with its roots in a materialistic view of the universe and self-untreadness as well, the Western civilization was incapable of reviving the spiritual culture of ancient India directly unto the floor. It will be too much to hold that a civilization (i. e. West) which exaggerates bodily and mental life could directly lead to the discovery of the inner spirit of man and its immense possibilities. At best, it could give rise to conditions under which the dormant creative faculty of the Indian spirit could be revived.

Another important feature to be born in mind is that the first and immediate effect of the introduction of Western pattern of education in our country by a joint effort of some of the leading citizens of Calcutta and the Christian missionaries — in general — has more a negative effect in this regard. No doubt it became a centre of intellectual revolution, a nursery for the origin and dissemination of new ideas of change in education, culture, society and politics. But unfortunately its alumni denationalised Indian spirit instead of being any help to recover the spiritual heritage of the past. They began to take pride in denouncing everything Indian. To them the ancient heritage of India was anathema. They denounced it outright as vile and corrupt and unworthy of the regard of rational beings.



This is how they became great admirers of everything Western and opened the doors for India to develop an attitude of contempt and inferiority complex towards their great religions and cultural traditions. Referring to this state of affairs, Prof. D. S. Sarma rightly observes :

“This was the first time perhaps that the Indian mind was thrown off its balance. Even the devastating Muslim invasions and conquests had not produced a result of this kind.”  
(Sarma, D. S. *Hinduism through the ages*. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. P. 58.)

### British Impact (positive side)

Every “no-moon” has its positive side to show at some or other time. And the impact of Western thought is no exception. It gave momentum to the renaissance movement in India. English education enabled Indian mind for the first time to have a closer view of Western culture. As a result of which the mental outlook of the educated Indian mind was broadened. Indian people now could understand and appreciate the ideological forces that were the living force for the West. They also felt the direct impact of a great industrial, scientific and technical civilization which was in a process to change the shape of the world. It also engendered in them a new critical and reflective attitude and they became more conscious of the shortcomings of their own society. Moreover, they could be conscious of evils that had entered Indian society through the ages and had almost deprived it of its dynamism and creative vigour.

The Indian thinkers were now determined to reform society and purge it of all its evils. Infanticide, child marriage, Sati, enforced widowhood, purdah, Devadasi, untouchability, caste system and prohibition of foreign travel appeared to them as the plagues of Hindu society which were to be rooted out altogether. Above all, the Indian thinkers and reformers of this period condemned and discouraged the tendency of some English educated people to entertain blind and uncritical admiration for everything Western and cherish hostility towards their own culture and civilization.

Some reformers and leaders of this century aroused in people a sense of patriotism and greater admiration and respect for its rich cultural tradition. To this effect they also got considerable support from a section of Western indologists, orientalisists and some other Western friends and well wishers of India.

Translations of Sanskrit texts into English created sensation in the Indian mind and made English-educated people to realise



the greatness and depth of Indian culture and civilization. The names of some of the great Western indologists and orientalists to be particularly mentioned here are Sir William Jones, Sir Charles Wilkins, Colebrooke, Wilson, Muir, Monier Williams, Max Mueller, James Fergusson, Dr. Bufler, Dr. Fleet and Havel.

That is how the many-faceted contribution of Britishraj is recognised for the birth of Indian Renaissance Movement. But some scholars like Sri Aurobindo would not like to recognise the British impact, rather would bestow the credit on Indian spirituality or the inherent Sakti. At best British impact might have had indirect effect in a secondary level. So in what follows, we shall discuss how the Indian spirit is responsible for Indian renaissance.

### **Indian Spirituality and Indian Renaissance**

It is quite evident that the spread of Western education could not by itself have fostered and promoted the renaissance unless there had not been a genuine urge from within, a spirit of renaissance aiming at the revival of what was noble and elevating in India's past. That is how we are led to assess that though the West has had its influence on Indian minds for a national resurgence, the main factor responsible for this is the Sakti of India which has thrown up a large number of high-souled Indians who incarnated in themselves the new spirit of awakening. How the sprout of Renaissance came out to stand as a gigantic banyan tree is the stimulation of the West to revive the dormant intellectual and critical impulse of the people, to force them to turn to their past and recover the spiritual heritage, and put the revived spirit face to face with novel conditions and ideas and the urgent necessity of understanding and conquering them.

The so-called Renaissance Movement is not confined to religion only. It is so comprehensive that it reflects almost all departments of national life ; a many-sided movement concerned with rejuvenating all aspects of Indian life and thought, education, humanities, the social sciences, the physical sciences, the economic, political and social life of the country, literature and the other fine arts: Philosophy and Religion.

It is thus naturally difficult to count all the departments of activity which were shaped by the Renaissance Movement. Raja Ram Mohun Roy was concerned in a way with education and social life and its reformation and some aspects of the Hindu religion. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda liberalised and modernised Hinduism and took it back to its universal roots and form. They were concerned with the very soul of the Indian Renaissance.



Having thus analysed some factors which contributed to the Indian Renaissance, we may now set forth its various phases.

### **The Different Phases of the Indian Renaissance Movement**

As is said earlier, the impact of the West on India was to some extent destructive. Hinduism, as it was understood and practised in those days, was unable to withstand the terrific forces of the Western onslaught. Many of its ideas, institutions and practices were unable to stand those examinations and scrutiny and were therefore summarily rejected by the young men of Bengal who had received Western education. They became English in taste, opinions, words and intellect and the dream of Macaulay was being realised to some extent.

The educated youth became denationalised and began to ape European manners and to look with irreverence, if not with contempt, upon the past civilization of the Hindus. As Lord Ronald says that westernisation became the fashion of the day and westernism demanded its votaries that they should cry down the civilisation of their own country. The more ardent their admiration for everything European, the more vehement became their denunciation of everything Eastern.

But fortunately, this spirit did not spread widely. It failed to filter down to the masses nor could it affect all the educated youngmen. The factor which India could receive from complete westernisation was that she lives centrally in the spirit, with less buoyancy and vivacity and therefore with a less ready adaptiveness of creation, but a greater, intenser, more brooding depth. In this respect India differs greatly from Japan who lives centrally in her temperament and in her aesthetic sense and has therefore been more rapidly assimilative of Western culture.

When men like Raja Ram Mohun Roy in Bengal and Mahadev Govind Ranade in Maharashtra who had some knowledge of the past to react differently to the West, by way of looking upon the past culture from a new angle and tried to understand and reshape it in the light of new ideas and knowledge to suit the modern society, there arose Indian renaissance. They became the pioneers of social reforms and initiated the liberal tradition in Indian thought. Though Raja Ram Mohun Roy and Justice Ranade are famous as great social reformers, they were no less interested in political and educational matters where they showed remarkable powers of their minds. Of course, for several reasons they could not exercise their powers in these fields at large.

We have to look to men like Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Gopala Krishna Gokhale and Surendranath Banerjee



who with many others, introduced, formulated and strengthened the Western pattern of the so-called liberal tradition in the political thinking of modern India. This, without any hesitation, may be regarded as the first phase of the Indian renaissance which was the outcome of Western impact on Indian spirituality.

The contrast feature, as it could be said the next phase of the renaissance, is said to have been carried on by Swami Dayananda Saraswati who did not know English at all. Thus this patriot remained unaffected from the influence of English civilisation and asked his countrymen to go back to the purity of the Vedic civilization. The Arya Samaj founded by him was mainly responsible for the awakening among the people of Northern India as well as for social and religious reform.

During the third phase, there arose a great figure in the personality of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa who laid emphasis on the recovery of the old spiritual knowledge and experience in all its splendour, depth and fullness as the first and the most essential work of the religious and the social reform. His great disciple, Swami Vivekananda, carried out the flag flying adding a new dimension by interpreting Vedanta scientifically and uplifting the masses by channelising their thought in political and philosophical realm.

In the pronouncements of Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo we see the fourth stage of Indian renaissance. Their contribution through literature helped Indian renaissance to become fuller and more self-conscious, and nationalism purer and nobler. The tradition both in Indian renaissance and political thinking of Modern India finds its high water-mark in Tilak, Lajapat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal.

The most significant phase starts with Mahatma Gandhi. He contributed immensely towards giving a new direction and form to the Renaissance Movement and brought forth into active life some of the old and characteristic features of ancient Indian culture. He was mainly responsible for turning the national struggle for independence into new channels and thereby made a rich addition to social, religious and political ideas.

### **Assessment of Indian Renaissance Movement**

Thus the overall description suggests that the social, political and philosophical thinking of modern India has been shaped under the stress of different forces and contains several currents of thoughts. They cannot be assessed as a consistent or systematic whole. The reason for this non-integration may be found in the mutual incompatibility of the Western influence and the Indian culture. India would have been completely westernised



like Japan if she had accepted Western culture without a second thought. But fortunately she has tried to Indianise what she got from the West. This has been the chief aim and purpose of the Indian Renaissance Movement which is yet to see its end-point.

Till this day Western impact has not been uprooted from India, though Britishers have left the nation since more than three decades. Nor Indian renaissance has come to its saturation. In its process, even now, the renaissance is effected by Western thought, but certainly not uncritically. The process of "Manana" and "Nidhidhyasana" has saved Indian culture to get its position in the peak. The task of reconstructing a new India, which ought to retain what is of value in the ancient culture and absorb what the new scientific and technical knowledge has to give is still going on. No better job can be discharged to put the characteristics of the Indian renaissance in a nutshell than to quote Sri Aurobindo — its greatest exponent and interpreter. He writes :

"It is rather a process of a new creation in which the spiritual power of the Indian mind remains supreme, recovers its truths, accepts whatever it finds sound or true, useful or inevitable of the modern idea or form but so transmutes and Indianises it, so absorbs and transforms it that its foreign character disappears and it becomes another harmonious element in the characteristic working of the ancient goddess, the Sakti of India, mastering and taking possession of the modern influence no longer possessed or overcome by it. (Sri Aurobindo, *The Renaissance in India*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. pp. 21-22.)

Since the renaissance has exerted a great deal of impact on the proceedings of Indian National Movement playing a notable role in shaping its political, philosophical and social thinking, it can very well be inferred that the later must have been greatly shaped and moulded by its central feature, namely spirituality. In its most representative and leading thinkers like Lokamanya Tilak, Tagore and Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi, social, philosophical and political thinking stands at the edge of religion.

If the distinctive feature of the ancient Greek political thought was its ethics and that of the Roman thought legal approach and if German political thought is immensely influenced by its metaphysical trend, in modern Indian thinkers philosophy, politics and religion have been closely knitted very successfully. Gandhiji dazzles as the best illustration in its favour. He made it as the mission of his life to interact religion and politics.



## A Paean of Joy

JANAMANCHI VENKATRAMAIAH

What have you given me and  
What have you taken from me,  
O Lord,  
You have made a losing bargain !

You have brought this ignorant one, this prānkish wastrel,  
And you have sold yourself, the desire-fulfilling touch-stone.  
For a broken shell I got heaps of wealth,  
I have become one without the second in glory ;  
Even a clod of earth, at the magic touch of  
Your mercy, becomes a mountain of gold, with  
the sun going round it.

Like the whirl-wind, I went in pride wherever the wind blew  
Today, my strength is broken, my force is spent, by breath is hot  
and I have come to you as to a mother drinking her milk  
like a helpless child.

You have come to a poor man's hut, O Lord !  
And, you have brought with you the light of a myriad suns.

Your shadow even, I cannot see  
not even that sign that you have come,  
You have deceived me cleverly,  
You have overwhelmed this hut in a flood of light.

I lay mute in a corner like a cold clad  
Losing all zeal for life ;

But now I have become a new man,  
And,

Like the kokil virile, with new songs in my throat  
Make them your own, giving them a place  
in your book of poetry, in your joy,

O ! Little Krishna mine !

— Rendering from the original in Telugu by M. Visweswara Rao



## Keats' Diction in the ode " ON A GRECIAN URN "

Prof. M. R. VYAS

Among all the odes, the ode *On a Grecian Urn* has been interpreted in various ways by different critics. The purpose and its meaning, too, have been variously judged. We cannot discard the possibility that Keats may have stored in his mind a particular work of Greek art, most probably of the Elgin marbles, which he had seen in the British museum, or had discovered through Champan's Homer and Lempridre's Classical Dictionary. The familiarity with Greek marble vases seems to be an important aspect of Keats' poetry: he has elsewhere also—in the ode *On Indolence*—touched on the marble urn on which he visualises three figures in a state of reverie and they haunt him much:

"They pass'd, like figures on a marble urn,  
When shifted round to see the other side;  
They came again; as when the urn once more  
Is shifted round, the first seen shades return."

(St. I, II, 5-8)

The urn which Keats describes in the ode, however, may not be an actual one; it is an imaginative creation and it is his individual invention, too. In this connection E. C. Pettet says, "The urn itself is an imaginary one. ... In their organisation, elaboration, and in the emotions and the modes of sensibility associated with them, the scenes on the Grecian Urn are primarily of Keats' own making".<sup>1</sup> In the ode, although the urn passes through different stages, it remains the same throughout. The five stanzas of the ode not only present a different world, but provide a possibility of achieving permanent joy of life through a work of art.

### Stanza One

In the very first stanza, we find a sense of paradox. The urn speaks and expresses histories. However, we do not expect it to speak. The use of the word "express" in the opening



stanza and the word "say'st" in the last stanza reveal that Keats has presented the urn as a historian who utters truths of histories. However, the atmosphere that surrounds the urn seems to be of silence. It has been emphasised with the words "quietness" and "silence". This atmosphere is, as it were, beyond sound and beyond change, too. Keats addresses the urn directly and calls it "still unravish'd bride of quietness". The participial adjective "unravish'd" endows the urn with a certain tender, "virginal" mystery and freshness. The word "foster" in "foster-child" suggests that the urn is not the actual creation of "silence" and "slow time". Some unknown artist may have created the urn, but "silence" and "slow time" have nurtured and fostered it through the long centuries. The expressions "unravish'd" bride and "foster-child" further reveal a contrast, in that the urn is young and fresh; while the parents — "silence" and "slow time" — are old. Then the poet calls it a "sylvan historian". "What is a 'sylvan historian?'" asks Cleanth Brooks. "A historian who is like the forest rustic, a woodlander? Or, a historian who writes histories of the forest? Presumably, the urn is sylvan in both senses".<sup>2</sup> We can also say that the epithet "sylvan", taken singly, in a sense anticipates the holy festivals and lovers' frolics in ancient times which form the theme of the stanzas that follow. In a narrower sense, it refers to the flowers and leaves, that are carved, on the urn. The word "legend" two lines later strengthens these meanings by its dual sense of "story" or "history" and also "inscription".

The compound "leaf-fring'd" has the Keatsean clarity of visual image, while the verb "haunts", through its sense of immaterial visitation conveys the opposite meaning of uncertainty and mystery, a sense reinforced in the rest of the stanza through the successive questions which turn the urn into something of lovable enigma. The word "Tempe" calls to mind the beautiful valley in Thessaly, while "arcady" stands for an ideal land that represents pastoral simplicity. Ordinarily the historian gives us the names and dates of the people. However, the men, gods and the maidens that are presented by the urn, in its role of a "sylvan historian" are nameless and dateless. The urn presents the picture of the maidens and their lovers. The action of the men and maidens is suggested through — "what struggle to escape". The "struggle" and "wild ecstasy" seen in the "pursuit" and "escape" of the lovers on the urn are after all images of arrested action. The description reminds us of the pair Psyche and Cupid as

"They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass".

(St. II, I, 3)



Keats seems to suggest here the raptures of joy one can seek in an atmosphere of "silence" and "quietness". In order to achieve such a joy one must listen carefully to the truths of the histories, expressed by the beautiful urn. The "wild ecstasy" that concludes the stanza is in apparent contrast with the "quietness" and "silence" mentioned in the first two lines. Inwardly, however, the beginning and the end of the stanza are in harmony, in the sense that both relate to a world apart and away from the world of mundane experience: the world of art and imagination.

### Stanza Two

The power of the urn lies in its appeal to the imagination rather than the senses. We move into the world presented by the urn. The use of the words "unheard" and "no tone" further strengthen the atmosphere of silence created by the opening lines of the ode. The music that is "heard" appeals to the senses: it is sensuous. It is sweet and audible, while the music that is "unheard" appeals to the spirit. It is sweeter and can be heard in the silence of the contemplative imagination. This music comes from the "soft pipes." The word "soft" is used in various contexts by Keats. Frequently, the word suggests the softness of flesh — of lips, breasts, hands. For example, in *Endymion* both Peona and the Indian Maid have soft hands. We find "soft hand" in the ode *On Melancholy* — "Emprison her soft hand" (St. II, I, 19). Keats combines the ideas of gentleness and pleasing sensation when he uses the word "soft" for the agreeable influence of sleep, as in "soft-closer of our eyes".<sup>3</sup> "Soft-embalmer of the still midnight".<sup>4</sup> However, Keats also has used "soft" to suggest gentle breeze in his early poem *Colidore*:

"Softly the breezes from the forest came,  
Softly they blow aside the taper's flame."

(St. II, 152-153)

In the ode *To Autumn*, too, the word describes the gentle action of the wind.

"Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind."

(St. II, I, 15)

Here also Keats has used the word "soft" to suggest pleasing sensations that he wants the pipes to provide. The figures that were nameless in the earlier stanza are made more clear in the lines that follow. There is a handsome youth that plays the pipe beneath the trees. The song of the youth is endless



interminable — a condition attainable only in the realm of art. The trees also will never be bare. Keats here seems to escape from that sorrowful realization of the ode *On Melancholy* — "Beauty that must die".<sup>5</sup> The beauty of the figures and the trees that are carved on the urn will remain for ever beautiful. Cleanth Brooks has rightly noted the darker implications of the negatives in these lines when he says, "The beauty portrayed is deathless because it is lifeless".<sup>6</sup> an idea he rightly links with the "cold pastoral" of stanza five.

If the maiden will remain beautiful for ever, then the lover will love her for ever, too. But the lover will love his maiden for ever without kissing her. He is deprived of perfect happiness — joys of kissing the maiden. A sense of paradox continues, it appears, as if Keats tries to seek the kernel of beauty that is unfading — deathless — through an eternal song. Probably, all true art is immortal and timeless and this fact Keats wants to emphasise through the urn. For Keats the urn stands for permanent joy — "wild ecstasy." The urn provides him an ideal emblem, nurtured and preserved by time, for eternity and timelessness.

The lover's dissatisfaction is shown through the phrase — "never canst thou kiss." But at the end of the stanza we find a hope for the lover that he will love his maiden for ever, and she will remain beautiful for ever, too. From the mood of despair — "never canst thou love", and "thou hast not thy bliss" — we move towards the consolation and hope — "She cannot face", and "For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!" In the ode *On Melancholy* Keats has dealt with Beauty and her objects "morning rose", "globed peonies" and the beautiful eyes of the mistress. However, these objects fade soon. The beauty that is shown in that ode is fading — shortlived — while the beauty that is projected on the urn here is changeless — unfading. It lasts for ever and hence is eternal.

### Stanza Three

Now we move into the deep forest where the happy boughs cannot shed the leaves nor bid a farewell to the Spring. It is implied that the leaves have become an inseparable part of the boughs. The boughs seem to be happy in the season of Spring. They seem reluctant to send out the leaves or bid a farewell to the Spring. The inability of the boughs to shed their leaves is linked with the changeless beauty of the maiden. Spring symbolises the ever green nature. Spring is the season of budding of new flowers and leaves. The use of the word "happy" many times — as many as six times — provides a sense of contrast



with the weariness endemic to the mortal world. Keats has expressed his theory of Pleasure Thermometer in his letter to John Taylor (30 January, 1818): "..... When I wrote it (where lies Happiness?....." *Endymion* I, 777-781), it was a regular stepping of the Imagination towards a Truth. My having written that Argument passage will perhaps be of the greatest service to me of anything I ever did. It set before me at once the gradations of Happiness even like a kind of Pleasure Thermometer".<sup>7</sup> After the "happy boughs" we have a "happy melodist" who is unwearied." Weariness is an inevitable part of the lot of human beings: therefore they are deprived of happiness. The figures that are carved on the urn are happy because they are "unwearied." The word "happy" employed by Keats does not suggest bodily passion that offers momentary pleasure; it suggests eternal joy which keeps the melodist's very song "ever new" and the lover's love "For ever warm." On the one hand "happy love" is "For ever warm," and then it is "Still to be enjoy'd." According to Cleanth Brooks, "..... the tenor of the whole poem suggests that the warmth of the love depends upon the fact that it has not been enjoyed—that is, 'warm and still to be enjoy'd' may mean also 'warm because still to be enjoy'd'." <sup>8</sup> The lover has not thoroughly enjoyed the pleasure of a kiss, though he loves his maiden for ever. The maiden thus is made the more to resemble the urn in being, as it were, the "unravish" bride of quietness. The phrase "still to be enjoy'd" suggests the virginal aspect of the maiden and an unsatisfied sexual passion of the lover. The use of the word "panting" further strengthens the warmth of love. The lover will remain young for ever and also will feel the warmth of the love endlessly. Such love seems to be out of reach for the human passion. It is above human passion: the word "above" separates the two worlds—the world of human passion from the realm of art or imagination. The "human passion" leaves the heart in a high-sorrowful state and insatiated condition. As a result of this the earthly fever grips the human passion. This fever is expressed through "burning forehead," and "a parching tongue."

#### Stanza Four

From the world of flowers and trees, leaves and boughs we are now taken to the communal life in a nameless town. The scene is of a sacrifice and a sacrificial procession. The procession includes the young cow, the priest, and the worshippers. The town is nameless and dateless. We can not visualize a definite picture of the town: it may be a little town that is situated near the river or on seashore or on a mountain. But



It has got a “peaceful citadel”. In fact the town is only imagined from the scene of the procession as engraved on the urn. Yet there is one aspect of the town, not on the urn that interests Keats especially. It is its desolation on the pious morning. As the people move out in a procession led by a priest, its streets turn empty and desolate. Here it appears that the atmosphere of silence which prefigured earlier, now further intensifies in this stanza through such words as, “emptied”, “peaceful”, “silent” and “desolate”. From the forests, the silence is now spread in the world of men; the sacrificial procession seems to be so important that every one has gone there to witness the sacrifice. The stanza begins with the people’s coming to the sacrificial procession; it ends with the town emptied and desolate. The description of the procession gets a decorative rather than realistic touch through the phrased “... silken flanks with garlands drest”.

#### Stanza Five

The urn once again occupies the centre in the last stanza. The word “shape” makes us visualize the urn as an object of art. The word “Attic” suggests an age-old relationship of the urn and the past stretching back to ancient Athens. The urn is also addressed as “Fair attitude,” a phrase which not only singles it out as a beautiful object, but also once again conveys through the apt use of the word “attitude,” the idea of an action that is fixed or frozen, a theme that is worked out in different ways in the five successive stanzas of this ode and that finds its rather cryptic conclusion in the identification of beauty and truth in its last but one line. The word “brede,” combined with the verbal adjective “overwrought”, conveys the suggestion of decorative engraving on the urn, and thereby strengthens the idea that the urn is an object of art that stands apart in the realm of common earthly experiences, and as such commands an order of perfection and harmony not encountered elsewhere in the world. The men and women presented by the urn seemed to be human beings in the third stanza.

“For ever warm and still to be enjoy’d,  
For ever panting, and for ever young.”

Now, however, these very figures—men and maidens—are of “marble”—Keats probably sees them as being immortal because they are inhuman. The age will not tell on these figures as they are frozen and fixed. The men and maidens are “overwrought, / With forest branches and the trodden weed.” This is the decorative aspect, which has been expressed earlier in “silken flanks with garlands drest.”



The urn appears to be such a silent form that it teases us out of thought like eternity itself. Keats associates silence with eternity. The urn stands for eternity. Why should the urn tease us? We can presume that as a sylvan historian the urn expresses the tale of the men and maiden who are timeless and nameless. As Cleanth Brooks puts it, "..... like eternity, its history is beyond time, outside time, and for this very reason bewilders our time-ridden minds: it teases us".<sup>9</sup> The sylvan historian now turns into a "Cold-Pastoral". The story of the lovers is full of warm love that will remain young for ever. It also presents the lively picture of the sacrificial procession. Despite this the urn itself remains cold. It is described as a "Pastoral" to suggest the simple and natural life of the people it presents. The tale which the urn recites continues from one generation to other. Although the generation passes, the urn will remain for ever young and fresh even amidst the woes of human beings. The life of men and women on the earth seems to be full of sorrows and sufferings. The only solace comes to the human beings from the urn itself that remains "a friend to man." The urn, however, remains unaffected, even though it lives in the mortal world. As a historian, it tells the truth that "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." Beauty and truth here seem to mingle with each other and then become inseparable.

The last two lines of the ode have aroused different opinions regarding their meaning. According to T. S. Eliot "... this line ("Beauty is truth, truth beauty — that is all") strikes... as a serious blemish".<sup>10</sup> William Empson finds "... that the last lines with their brash attempt to end with a smart bit of philosophy have not got enough knowledge behind them, and are flashy in the same way".<sup>11</sup> A point of dispute regarding the lines beginning "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" concerns the question as to who speaks the lines to whom! Is it the poet or the urn? If we take the urn to be "a friend to men," then it has every right to utter these lines. The utterance seems to be a solace for the suffering humanity. It is a truth that has come from the age-long experience of the urn. Man should know this truth if he wants to achieve permanent happiness. This is the only truth which exists on the earth which mankind should know. Cleanth Brooks says, "... it is the only kind that we have to have".<sup>12</sup> The relation between beauty and truth seems to have exercised the mind and art of Keats throughout his life. In his letters Keats has made a reference to this point in at least two different places. In his letter to Benjamin Bailey (22 November, 1817) he wrote: "I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination — What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth".<sup>13</sup> A



month later he wrote to George and Tom Keats (21 December, 1817): "The excellence of every art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate, from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth".<sup>14</sup> Keats in the last lines of the ode seems to go one step further. He thinks beauty with truth in such a manner that both become inseparable. The idea has been summed up by H. W. Garrod in this manner: "...There is nothing real but the beautiful, and nothing beautiful but the real".<sup>15</sup> By "Truth" Keats implies reality which underlies all experience. It is the central essence of life. Beauty for Keats in the ode *On a Grecian Urn* is not a sensuous beauty that fades and dies and provides but a momentary pleasure. The word is used here in a fuller aesthetic sense for a beauty which is changeless and is a source of eternal happiness for men. Kenneth Muir believes that, "In the last stanza Keats proclaims that the sorrows and the meaninglessness of life can be transcended if we learn the lesson of the Urn, that "Beauty is truth, truth beauty".<sup>16</sup>

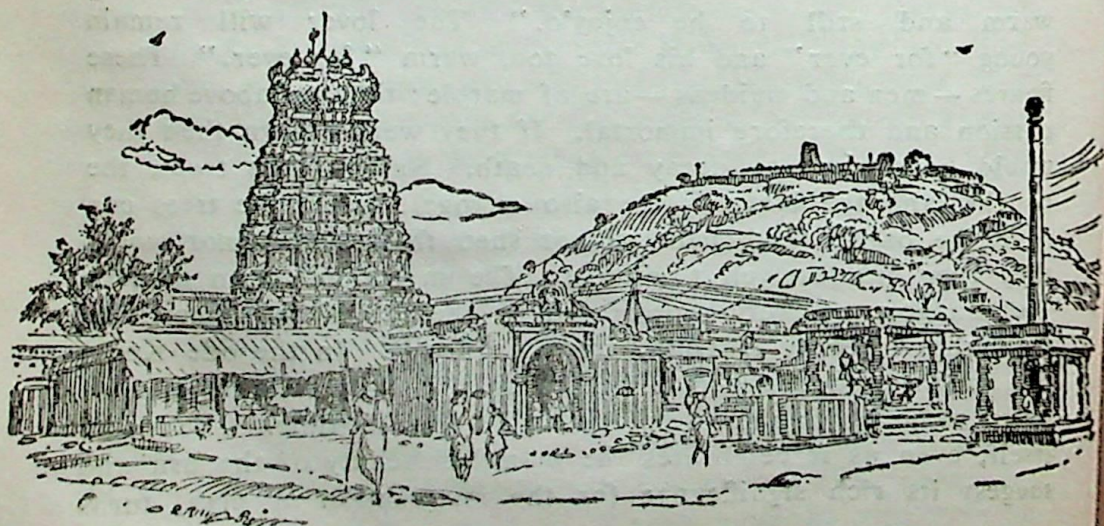
The ode *On a Grecian Urn*, among all the odes, is "his maturest work".<sup>17</sup> It is mature in many ways. It is written during the best period of Keats' poetic life. Nowhere else, in the odes of course, has he touched the subject of Beauty that is changeless and unperishable. In the marble urn he has visualised the beauty which is deathless. The figures that are carved on the urn stand for changeless beauty. "She cannot fade" and "For ever a wilt thou love" are suggestions of a beauty which is unfading and unperishable. Similarly, the song which the melodist produces will remain "for ever new," as the melodist is "unwearied." This song is "unheard" and therefore is sweeter as it appeals to the spirit of man rather to the "sensual ear." The love of the lover is "For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd." The lover will remain young "for ever" and his love too, warm "for ever." These figures—men and maidens—are of marble: they are above human passion and therefore immortal. If they were human then they would be subject to decay and death. Nature—the trees, the boughs, and the leaves—are also changeless: for the trees can never be bare; the boughs cannot shed their leaves, nor would they ever bid farewell to Spring. The mortal men can achieve the changeless beauty represented by the urn if they know the truth that "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." In the ode Keats has sought and realized a beauty that is imperishable and so gives enduring happiness to men who live in time. The poem itself, even as it celebrates the manifold beauty of the urn and suggest its rich significance for the imagination of man, turns



into an object of beauty, an object of art that is a source of permanent joy for the readers. And the choice and patterning of the words in the ode are the primary means by which Keats has achieved this dual success.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> E. C. Pettet, *On the Poetry of Keats*. Cambridge Univ. Press. 1957. Pp. 317-318.
- <sup>2</sup> Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn*. London University Paperback, 1949. P. 127.
- <sup>3</sup> *Sleep and Poetry*, 1, 11.
- <sup>4</sup> *To Sleep* I, 1.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ode on Melancholy*, III, 1.
- <sup>6</sup> Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn*. (1949) P. 129.
- <sup>7</sup> Hyder Rollins, Ed. *The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. 1958. P. 218. Hereafter cited as *Letters* I, 218.
- <sup>8</sup> Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn* (1949) P. 130.
- <sup>9</sup> Cleanth Brooks, P. 133.
- <sup>10</sup> T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*, (1932). Rpt in G. S. Fraser Ed. *John Keats: Odes*. London MacMillan. 1971. P. 128.
- <sup>11</sup> William Empson. *The Structure of Complex Words*. (1931) Rpt. in G. S. Fraser Ed. *John Keats: Odes*. (1971). P. 130.
- <sup>12</sup> *The Well Wrought Urn* (1949). P. 134.
- <sup>13</sup> *Letters*, I, P. 184.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, P. 192.
- <sup>15</sup> H. O. Garrod, *Keats*, 2nd Ed. Rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939. P. 103.
- <sup>16</sup> Kenneth Muir Ed. *John Keats: A Reassessment* (1958) Rpt. in G. S. Fraser Ed. *John Keats Odes* (1971). P. 229.
- <sup>17</sup> C. M. Bowrd, *The Romantic Imagination*. London: Oxford Univ. Press (1950). 6th imp. 1973. P. 127.





## Meeting You

BRAJAKISHORE DAS

Unexpectedly I meet you at times  
and grow restless. You keep silent  
but I can understand the depth of your agony.  
You have tracked a long way  
and have come to me. Be sure you've made  
no wrong choice. Many are the wounds,  
the crises and the ignominies  
inflicted on you. I know not your past,  
hence I know not what exactly is your sorrow.  
But let me wipe away the warm tears  
from your eyes. I too was a lone traveller  
like you and often my feet have bled  
while strange poisons embittered my life —  
but now my tongue has turned  
all poison into nectar. Today when I meet you  
I forget my own agonies and fears  
as I'm sure you'll share my sorrows  
with understanding.

— *Translated from Oriya by the poet*

## A Simile

UMANATH BHATTACHARYA

"Life's like water on a lotus leaf."  
So sang our poet. But more uncertain and fickle  
Is love, I find. For no one knows when  
The fragile thing will spill over. And strange  
Indeed is She who behaves like the lotus leaf:  
Indifferent and unattached amid the showers of love.

On her delicate leaf tears sparkle,  
Like dew and pearls flashes my fervid affection.  
Sometimes, it seems, as if a lotus would bloom  
Red wine, and as intoxicating.  
But suddenly it rolls down; and blood splashes  
In my bosom. Does it make any difference

With the lotus leaf? Oh no. Its daintiness  
Its soft green, its velvety beauty suffer no change.  
Tears leave no trace on the lotus leaf,  
And fruitless is Lover's penance to tinge her heart.



# RACE AND LANGUAGE

Dr. MADHUSUDAN MALLIK

## Introduction

Race has played a great part in the history of the world. What it really means is yet a task to be determined with precision. Race denotes heredity, and heredity includes all the moral, social and intellectual qualities that man can transmit. The racists hold that the racial traits — somatological or bodily characteristics and all psychological predispositions and impulses — are immutable. They therefore put the theory that the operation of the law of universal suffrage will establish man of average intelligence into public offices rather than the person of high integrity, education and birth by heredity. It will lead to the perpetuation of inferior types of men causing corresponding loss in efficiency in the social and national framework.

## The Concept of the term 'Race'

The term race does not possess any definite connotation of its own either in literature or in social sciences. It is used in a variety of senses. To an ethnologist race is merely a physiological and anatomical concept concerned with such factors as head-form, shape of the nose, stature, hair, etc. Culturally homogenous group of people is sometimes called a race. The popular conception of race is highly unscientific. Politicians very often exploit it to suit their personal ends. They try to make capital out of it by an appeal to scientists. Anthropologists, geneticists, etc., differ in the way of their approach to racial problems. Everybody has an idea of the concepts of race. The term race at times denotes a body of people living hereditarily in a country for quite a number of generations, say like English or French people.



### Etymology of the term "Race"

The etymology of the term race is still involved in mystery. It is debatable whether it is of Semitic or Slavonic origin. It is certain that the term is late in origin in Western European languages. It entered the English literature during the Tudor Period. In France it appeared in the sixteenth century. In Germany Leibnitz used it for the first time. In 1775 Immanuel Kant employed the word in his "*Von den Verschiedenen Races den Menschen.*" Joseph Richter in his "*Grammatisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache,*" (1791) introduced the word under the spelling "rasze" (cf. Italian "razza"). It probably entered Italian from Arabic or Hebrew, ras "head."

Originally the term indicated a descendant of single pair or couple, cf. The Race of Abraham (*Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, 1570 Edition). In Milton we have the "Race of Satan" (*Paradise Lost* 1887). It is absent in the Authorised Version of the Bible where "seed" or "generation" replaces race. A number of etymologies has been offered. It has been derived from Latin radix "root" or reiza "line." It is compared at times to Czeck raz "artery or blood." It is linked up to Basque arraca or arraze "male stud animal." It occurs in Spanish as "raza", Portuguese "raca," Old Castilian raz "head or piece."

### Characteristics of a Race

It is difficult to state definitely the characteristics a race possesses. The very term race eludes all explanations. The question is raised: "Is it a biological or an anthropological concept? Are the characteristics attributed to it "hereditary"? Are the traits, again immutable? Taking everything into consideration we will lay down a few traits with their noticeable features.

i. *Skin-Colour* (Pigmentation): It once played a dominant role in the classification of human races. With the progress of science diminishing, stress is being laid on it by ethnologists, as it is adaptive to climatic changes. It should be noted that black and white skins are characters of physiological importance. A black skin is associated with regions of high temperatures and is adaptive to the effects of solar radiation. Similarly white skin is associated with cooler climates and moderate degrees of sunlight. On the basis of pigmentation a broad and convenient scheme was once formulated.

- A. White Skin (Leucoderm) — Pinkish white to tawny white
- B. Yellow Skin (Xanthoderm) — Light brown to dark brown
- C. Black Skin (Melanoderm) — Dark chocolate brown to black.



Each one of them covers a wide variety of colours. It is taken as a mere convenient label. It does not show any genetic relationship. African Negroes are in no way related to Australian aborigines.

ii. *Stature*: It varies more widely than any other characters. It is readily subject to modifications by environmental conditions. Despite its modifiability intense differences still prevail and various ethnic groups are differentiated. Tallest of mankind (*cf.* the Patagonians whose average height is five feet eleven inches) and shortest of mankind (*cf.* the Bushmen whose average height is four feet six inches) are found to exist side by side in the world. Take the Swedes whose average height is five feet seven inches and who live with the Lapps who are on an average not more than five feet in height.

iii. *Eye-Colour and Eye-Form*: Eye-forms differ according to different races — slit or opening being horizontal (common in South Europe, North Africa and the Near East) oblique (among the Xanthodermous Asiatics, Epicanthic Fold or Mongolian Fold (among the Mongolian people, also among the leucoderms or Negroes).

The colour of the iris is different among different races — blue (among the true Nordics), dark brown (among the Xanthoderms), shades of black (among the Melanoderms).

iv. *Face*: i. Projection of the lower-face — Prognathous “forward-jawed”; ii. No projection of the lower face — Orthognathous “upright-jawed”.

v. *Nose*: Several types of nose — formations are recognised: i. Platyrrhine — when the breadth is above 85% (Nordic). ii. Mesorrhine — when the breadth is below 85% (Mediterranean). iii. Leptorrhine — when it is less than 70% (Jewish). iv. *Hair-Form and Hair - Colour*. Three types are recognised — A. Leiotrichy — Straight lank hair (*cf.* - Asiatic Xanthoderms — Chinese, Japanese, Eskimo, B. Cymotrichy — Smooth, wavy and curly hair (*cf.* West Asia, Europe, North East Africa, India and Australia). C. Ulotrichy — Woolly and frizzly hair (*cf.* Papuans, Melanesians, Negritos, Bushmen, etc.).

vii. *Head - Form*: This is the most frequent method employed by the physical anthropologists and is independent of environmental changes. It takes into account the relation between the length, breadth and less frequently the height of the head. The measurement of the head of a living being or skull of a dead person is called “Cephalic Index” in the case of a living human being and “Cranial Index” in the case of a skull. It takes into account the relation of the breadth of the head



or skull to its length, the length is usually put as 100. Three arbitrary groups are recognised — A. Dolichocephalic — Long-headed, B. Mesocephalic — Medium-headed, C. Brachycephalic — Short-headed.

viii. *Blood* : The term is used as an equivalent to "relationship." It is a great biological error to think that blood passes from the mother to the child in the womb. This misconception is traced to the writings of Aristotle. Internationally four groups of blood — O A B AB, are distinguished. Its importance is well-proved in blood transfusion.

### Classification of Races

Due to lack of standard techniques of measurements and definite criterion in physical traits, various authorities have devised various schemes of classifications — i. Linnaeus and Cuvier divided humanbeings into 3 races. ii. Blumenback (1795-1840) classified man into 5 races — white (Caucasic), yellow (Mongoloid), Tawny (Malayan), Red (American) and black (Ethiopic). iii. Denniker established 13 races and 30 sub-races. iv. A. B. Keith found 4 races. v. Eickstedt and Eugen Fischer distinguished 3 main races — Ethiopic, Mongoloid and Negroid. vi. Elliot Smith divided mankind into 6 races — Negro, Mongol, Nordic, Alpine, Australian and Mediterranean.

Divisions of races into sub-races are sometimes met with. Thus: i. Caucasoid — 4 sub-races (Nordic, Alpine, Dinaric, Mediterranean) ii. Mongoloid — 6 sub-races. iii. Negroid.

### Myth of an Aryan Race

Sir William Jones (1746 - 1794) introduced the term "Arya" into European literature. He used it in a purely linguistic sense. The term "arya" is Sanskrit in origin and means noble. It occurs in Avesta as Airya "venerable", in Old Persian as Ariya "an Aryan and of Aryan descent", and as name of a German tribe called "Arii". The Romans use the term "Ariana" to indicate Eastern Persia. That is the region now called Afghanistan. In course of time the term came to denote a group of languages — Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Avestan, etc., as having certain distinctive features in common.

In the year 1953 Max Mueller (1923 - 1900) introduced into current usage the term "Aryan" with two implications — a linguistic, that is, an Indo-Iranian sub-group of Indo-European and the other a geographic, that is, the cradle of these Aryan speaking languages in Ariana in Central Asia. He at the same time introduced an element of discord by



adumbrating a corresponding "Aryan Race". Max Mueller ultimately realised the grave error he committed and made amends. In 1888 he wrote "The Aryans are those who speak Aryan languages, whatever their colour, whatever their blood."

### Nordic Superiority

This evil that Max Mueller committed in attributing a racial colour to the term "Aryan" fired the imagination of a group of self-interested ethnologists in Europe and America. The English group is represented by T. Carlyle (1795-1881), T. A. Froude (1818-1894), C. Kingsley (1819-1895) and J. R. Green (1837-1883). In Germany the idea of "Aryan Superiority" became very popular. It was taken as basis of a propaganda by Houston Stewart Chamberlain in Germany and Madison Grant and others in America. In France Count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau (1816-22) — *Essai sur l'inegalite' des races humaines* (1853-55), advocated the superiority of a so-called Aryan Race, Lapouge, a Frenchman in his work *L'Aryen* (1899) identified the Aryans with the Nordic Race — fair, tall, long-headed, etc. Gustav Kossinna, the East Prussian nationalist anthropologist, advanced the theory that throughout the pre-historic ages all progress of mankind was due to the people whom he called the Nordic, the Germanic, the Aryan, all being used interchangeably. This theory supplied the inspiration to Adolf Hitler for his *Mein Kampf*. After the first world war, the Germans became frustrated and felt lonely. They were after a new philosophy and the theory of superior race (Herrenvolk) filled the gap to propagate a new "Weltanschauung."

### Are the Jews a Race?

In popular parlance everybody is familiar with the Jews as a race. Even the very scientists, the medical men, the historians, politicians and the like speak of the Jews as a race. What does it then mean? It means a group of people, though widely scattered, inherit a group of physical and behavioural pattern in common — short to middle in stature, a long hooked nose, greasy skin, dark complexion, thick lips, etc. Even the Jews pride themselves as "Gods chosen people". They sometimes feel that they belong to a distinct race — the Jewish Race.

From the standpoint of an anthropologist the Jews do not constitute a race but they form a distinct group. To support their case the *Old Testament* is sometimes quoted. But it is not consistent. Moreover from *Old Testament* we can glean that the early Jews lived on the western bank of the Euphrates. Terah, father of Abraham, was an inhabitant of Ur of the Chaldees,



close to the Persian Gulf. Here and to the south-west dwelt several Arab tribes speaking closely related dialects. The converts drawn by Abraham for his religion belonged to members of some of these tribes. Their physical differences were negligible. When they developed as a religious group, intermixture commenced first with the Canaanites of the lowlands and then with the Amorites of the highlands of the south-west. In course of time, the Hittites, the Amalekites, the Kenites and even the Egyptians got mixed up with them.

Thus we see, from the very early antiquity, the Jews a mixed people. It was during the period of Exodus (1220 B. C.) there were further mixtures with other races. At the time of Diaspora the Jews came into contact practically with almost all races of the globe. During the Babylonian Captivity (5th century B. C.) the Jews met many Mesopotamian peoples. The Jews penetrated the Hellenistic world in the fourth century B. C. During the time of the Maccabees in the second century B. C. the Jews made their movements to the Roman world — to Spain, Italy and France — and even to Rhineland. At the time of the First Crusade (11th century A. D.) due to massacre by the Christian knights, the Jews started movements towards the east. The Jews of Rhineland settled in Galicia, Bukovina and southern and western Ukraine. Here the Jews met their earlier settlers, adopted the speech of Rhineland group called "Yiddish" and became known as Askenazim (Hebrew name for German and Polish Jews) as distinguished from Sephardim (Jews of Spain and Portugal). In such a long sojourn diversity in physical traits is bound to occur.

### Racial Classification of Languages

Various types — geographical, geneological, typological, etc. — of classification of languages have been evolved at one time or another. It was once proposed that all languages should be classified on racial basis, that is, each race having a language of its own. The racial languages, so far as the theory goes, seem to be quite good. The study of history and anthropology has shown that race and language are not identical. This confused identity has been strengthened by the misleading nomenclatures adopted by certain writers, that is, terms used in anthropology (cf. Caucasian, Dravidian, etc.) were taken over by the linguists to use them in linguistic sense. There could be no greater mistake than this. Language is certainly a great bond that cements various races which, in course of time under common social, political and religious conditions, would develop a common speech. So the question of identity of race and language is



chimerical. The non-identity of race and language is demonstrated by examples drawn from history.

i. *Greek Colonies in the ancient world* — The Greeks planted a number of colonies in different parts of the ancient world — Mediterranean shores, France, Italy, Spain, Africa, etc. The earliest Greek settlement in Italy was Cumae in Campania on the Tyrrhenian Sea. Chalcis in Sicily was the earliest colony founded by the Greeks. Of the many Greek settlements in south Italy, Locri, Rhegium and Tarentum were famous. Massilia (modern Marseilles in France) was founded by the Ionian Greeks.

ii. *Norman Settlements in France* — The Normans who landed in Normandy in northern France were Danish heathen barbarians who spoke Teutonic languages. They accepted the language and customs of the natives. In course of a century or more, they disappeared from history as a Scandinavian pirate and became a foremost representative of the Roman speech and religion.

iii. *Wends in Prussia* — The eastern part of Germany has a Slavic substratum now represented by the descendants of the Wends. They infiltrated as far west as the Elbe, occupied lands left vacant by the Teutons. In course of time these Wends were Teutonised and were regarded as Germans of good standing. This total loss of language and identity of the Wends sets us a thinking of the modern Prussians (Barussians).

iv. *Malaya-Polynesian Languages* — These languages are spoken by a well-defined group which stretches a wide area of the earth's surface. It extends from Madagascar to Easter Island and from Hawaii to New Zealand and represents no less than three distinct races — the Negro-like Papuans and Melanesians, Malaya Race of Indonesia and Polynesians of the outer area.

v. *Huguenot refugees in Europe* — The Huguenots, a body of French Protestants of the 16th century, came into prominence in England in the reign of Henry II. In 1572 some thousands of Huguenots were slain in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. With the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, large number of Huguenots fled to Switzerland, Germany, Low countries and England.

vi. *Finns of Finland* — The Finns, originally a peaceful people, had their home in Central Asia north of the Sayan mountains and between Lake Baikal and headwaters of the Yenesei. Ethnologically they belong to the Altaic group of races but linguistically they are put in the Uralic or Finno-Ugric language-family.



vii. *Infiltration of population* — During the declining days of the Roman Empire the southern parts of Italy became the habitat of a large number of non-descript slaves of all races. They were brought to the coasts of the Mediterranean sea to work for the Roman overlords.

viii. *The Aryans as invaders* — The Aryans (that is, people speaking the Aryan language) entered India, met the aborigines having distinct racial affinities and imposed their Aryan speech.

ix. *Veddas of Ceylon* — The Veddas, a people of pre-Dravidic group, inhabit Ceylon and lead a very peaceful existence. They speak of a modified form of Ceylonese.

x. *The Japanese in North Japan* — The Japanese in the northern part of Japan speak Japanese but are to a very considerable part Ainu in blood.

xi. *Yukaghir of Siberia* — The Yukaghirs belong to the north-east of Siberia. Racially they preserve to a considerable extent their own blood but linguistically they are in a melting-pot. In most cases they borrow the language of their neighbours — the Turks, etc.

xii. *Magyars of Europe* — Magyar is the name given ethnologically to the predominant group in the population of Hungary. These people were originally Asiatic in origin. They migrated from the eastern European steppes and settled down in the Carpathian basin in 889 A. D. under the leadership of Arpad. They are now largely assimilated by the general European type in their physical features. Their language belongs to the Finno-Ugric group and bears no relationship with any other Indo-European languages.

xiii. *Negros of Africa* — The name Negro (Lat. *Niger*—black) is given to the dark-skinned peoples of Africa who had been carried away to different parts of the world, particularly America, to act as slaves. The Negros as a race belong to the Negroto division of mankind. They speak different languages in the countries of their settlements—in USA they speak English, in Cape, Briton, Island Gaelic, in Haiti Spanish, etc.





## The Mortal Frame

T. VASUDEVA REDDY

The beads of sweat that drain  
the gloomy brow of the tiller,  
The pearls of tears that flow from  
the sunken eyes of the starving beggar,  
The peals of lifeless laughter that echo  
the dreadful shallow mind,  
The weeds of rags and tatters that wrap  
the hideous heap of blasting bones,  
The heart-heaving aches and grisly pains that plague  
the foul and filthy skin,  
The wry and wrinkled skin that shroud  
the dusty musty mortal frame,  
The blades of dry grass that saw  
the torpid tongues of famished cattle,  
The parching petals of frosty flowers that feel  
the fatal kiss with the dreadful dust,  
In an abstruse way lead us to the bitter truth —  
Life is a gruesome gutter full of stink and stench  
With neither sunshine nor straw to grope to shore.

## Lost to the Reach

"KIVI"

In vain your eyes strain  
And the hearts throb in desire  
Desire it no more.  
Leave it as lost  
Though close to the grasp  
It eludes the reach,  
Though counselled a thousand times  
The mind failed to be  
The fox that turned its back to the grapes.  
  
Today and day before too  
the mind murmurs  
What eludes your reach  
is not the fruit  
but — a seed that could sprout.

— Translated from Tamil by Bala



## MALGUDI WOMEN

Dr. D. V. RAJYALAKSHMI

R. K. Narayan, one of the foremost Indian writers of fiction in English, has created interesting women characters against the imagined background of Malgudi representing the middle class society, examining their behaviour and attitude to life with remarkable observation and sensitivity. Though drawn from the local situation, the characters emerge as universal types whose psychological and existential concerns are shared by women all over the world. Narayan portrays a variety of women: traditional housewives, affectionate mothers, careful grannies, devoted artists and active social workers who are self-made and strong-minded, yet simple and ordinary. In their response to various problems in life, Malgudi women represent a new individuality, a new will and a new energy and even a new egoism prompted by a feminine awakening to the call of the modern.

Bharati, the heroine of "Waiting for the Mahatma" is a sensible Malgudi Portia who turned her Bassanio (Sriram) from a mere irresponsible romantic hero into a self-disciplined leader capable of sacrifice, altruism and charity. She is cast in the Gandhian concept and mould of Indian womanhood, standing for his ideals of non-violence, personal integrity, social consciousness and responsibility and the amelioration of the status of women and love and compassion for the downtrodden and the socially disadvantaged sections of humanity. Her first aim is to participate in the struggle for national freedom. After independence and with the approval of the Mahatma she marries Sriram and happily settles down in life. She is an admirable Malgudi woman "who could mould mountains out of clay." Bharati is the image of an ideal woman leader of Malgudi, who finally masters and achieves a dynamic balance between the claims of private individuality and those of public responsibility.

Susila in "The English Teacher" is a lovely Juliet married to a chastened Romeo, growing by the strength of her character



and stability of aspiration into a middle class Miranda whose married life is at once a sacrament of love and a song of miraculous innocence. Her love and devotion to her husband makes her home a heaven. But unfortunately her life of happiness and felicity is all too short-lived as she dies of typhoid. Her husband finds life miserable and meaningless without her and resigns himself to a life of disillusionment. Then Susila's spirit helps him to have contact with her through Raja Yoga and purges his mind out of grief and makes him feel "Grateful to Life and Death," as the first title of the novel indicates. Susila stands as an image of the ideal Hindu wife. We see on her portrayal the girlhood image of Bharati becoming a successful housewife who could be at once a dedicated wife and a benevolent Goddess.

Savitri in "The Dark Room" is an unsuccessful Nora who attempts to revolt against the tyranny of her husband who is but a civilized brute. Ramani believes in the dominance of men and behaves ruthlessly towards her remaining moody and always taunting her, giving her little freedom and much less importance as an individual. The detestable dark room is the only place for such a miserable wife who does not have the advantage of formal education and economic independence. She becomes more vexed when she comes to know her husband's relation with Shanta Bai. She can no longer tolerate her husband's infidelity and in a last desperate bid for freedom walks out of the house intending to die instead of obliging a dishonest husband. After being rescued from drowning she decides to live independently by hard work. A measure of rice she receives for sweeping a temple is the sign of a new beginning for her independent life. But this joy of deliverance cannot be for long. She imagines the hungry faces of her children with uncombed hair. Tears well up in her eyes and her revolt gives way and she at once returns home. The rebel in her is overshadowed by the mother. A traditional and ideal mother like Savitri needs a home and children more than independence. Motherly fulfilment illumines the darkest of the dark rooms like that of Savitri. She now becomes a staunch upholder of family integrity and honour which is within the moral frame work of her situation, as a great triumph to be belittled by her defiance and rebellion. But she is neither defeated, nor vanquished. She rather attains a new awareness of her own radical femininity. In the portrayal of Savitri we meet the wifehood image of Susila turning into that of a mother courageous.

Rosie in *The Guide* is well-educated and a born artist too. She is a graduate in Economics and a good dancer as well. As a devoted dancer she practises daily for full three hours at five



In the morning. She spends an hour or two in the forenoon studying ancient works on the art of dancing. She consults Pundits to explain Sanskrit verse and looks into *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* for new ideals. She has plans to proceed with her research in this art, of course if her husband permits her. She is such a great dancer that one could almost hear the ripple of water around the lotus being formed with her fingers. The art of dance is natural to the tradition of "Deva Dasis" dedicated to the worship of God, to which Rosie belongs. Rosie gets married to Marco in the hope of a stable family life and decides even to sacrifice her art of dancing, if necessary. But she comes to understand that her husband only pays lip-service to castelessness and conventionless marriage and considers the art of dance as "street acrobatics." She could have been an ideal educated wife to Marco if he only had provided the necessary inspirational motive to her who is a truly living replica of the sculptured images of dancers on the walls of Mepl caves to which he is so devoted in his own studies. But Marco remains cold and indifferent. Rosie tries her best to please him preferring "any kind of mother-in-law if it had meant one real live husband." Her instincts for life and love of art are destroyed by her husband. She finds herself cheated in life by a husband who is entirely self-centred and insensitive to her individual needs and aspirations. In a fit of psychological recoil, she allows herself to come under the influence of Raju, not because she has lost her heart to him but simply because he is ready to minister to her vital human needs so steadily starved by an irresponsible husband. Once again she failed as Raju's lover when the latter commercialises her art and offends her deep sensibility. Rosie fails both as a respectable wife and as a glamorous lover in spite of her pleasing qualities, being cheated in life twice by her husband and her lover alike.

Rosie represents the conflict of tradition and modernity experienced by many women in a transitional society. Rosie, the educated and the self-willed, is the rebel turned into Nalini enjoying enormous popularity as a great dancer. She decides to live alone and independently after her defeat in life. The traditional woman in her is up in rebellion craving for independence but yet, paradoxically enough, she longs for marital relations. That is why she thrills at the publication of her husband's book, frames a newspaper picture of her husband and places it on the table. The refrain "after all he is my husband" runs through her mind during the years of separation and her comment "it is better to end one's life on his door-step" sums up the tradition of centuries lying hidden in her psyche. The portrayal



of Savitri as a miserable wife and her eventual revolt is extended in Rosie who has the courage to withstand the struggle in herself. The other reason for her not coming back home is that she has no children who make the marriage bond more strong and stable. In a sense her situation represents one of terminal withdrawal into her own loneliness and isolation.

Daisy in *The Painter of Signs* is in charge of the family planning centre in Malgudi who lectures to men and women on birth control. She is a woman with a mind of her own and a room of her own capable of standing by herself with ability and independence. She does not depend on men and "she actually has no use for them as an integral part of her life." Daisy experiences a conflict in her between her feminine temperament and the role of a job holder. Though, temporarily, she is unable to resist the love of the painter of signs, she finds it repugnant to her sense of sincere devotion to her principles and her job. A fruitful marriage naturally entails children, but the idea of children horrifies her. At last, as an ideal believer in birth control she decides to remain a spinster. It is indeed admirable that she never regrets her decision. Daisy is a far cry from the conventional feminine type and her resolution on independence is an authentic reflection of her selfhood.

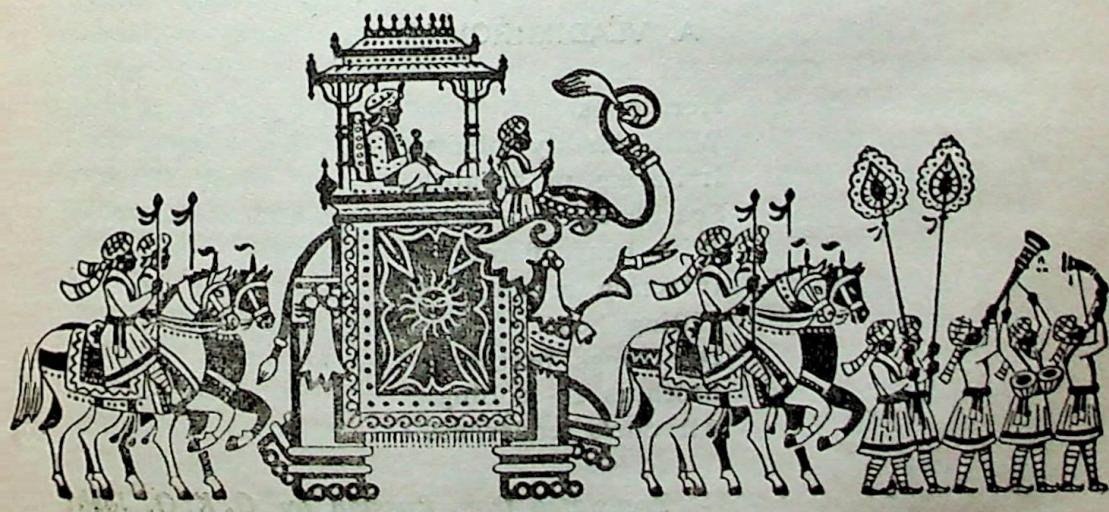
In the portrayal of Malgudi women Narayan observes a gradual progression from the pre-independence times to the modern times, in sensitive response to the Malgudi milieu. Malgudi grows from the small taluka town into a cosmopolitan city with many extensions, sight-seeing spots and tourist centres, lots of visitors from all the corners of the world pouring into Malgudi, introducing different cultures, causing new social changes in Malgudi. Gradually Malgudi became a city with a busy family centre. Bharati of Malgudi has now become Daisy of Malgudi. In all these changes Malgudi represents modern India rooted in the ancient tradition, a compromise between age-old traditions and the compulsions of modernity, an odd mixture of old values and new ideas. Accordingly women of Malgudi respond to their problems in varying degrees of accommodation. Modern Malgudi women favour single families, economic independence, self-fulfilment and assertion of equal rights with men. At the same time they strictly observe the traditional customs of festivals, naming ceremonies, schooling ceremonies, matching of horoscopes and other traditional ways. Malgudi women well represent tradition and individuality.

Narayan is often appreciated as a most objective writer. In the delineation of women characters he leans towards tradition.



Bharati, Savitri, Susila are ideal housewives who stand in contrast in their experiences of married life. In modern times it is unusual to meet such yielding and self-sacrificing women in actual life. Malgudi women of modern times are not frogs in the well. They care for achievements and self-fulfilment. Narayan seems to say that bonds of human life are more decisive than the variable elements in human affiliation in terms of social roles. Savitri realising the bonds of motherhood returns home as a regenerated person. Rose and Daisy renounce their marital bond and values for self-fulfilment and achievement in life and have therefore to live in isolation. One wonders what these women gain at last. Is this the way one can escape from human limitation? Is total alienation the price of feminist glory of independence and individuality? These are some of the disturbing questions that emerge from a study of the predicament of the Malgudi women.

Narayan is temperamentally an artist of the average, finding the heroic argument in the normal, quotidian quality of life, and always avoiding confrontation with the disturbing depths beyond the rippling surface of social reality. Accordingly his Malgudi women, in so far as they are shown in the demonstrable particulars of narrative action, share their creator's reticence and fear of over-dramatisation; but in what they show of themselves, despite their edited and exquisitely monitored responses towards their often paradoxical situations, they seem to imply an existential paradigm of Indian womanhood under the impact of change and claim attention as individuals affected, no less than their male counterparts, by the larger sociological issues of human identity, continuity and affiliation.





## Snow Storm

H. RAMZANOV

The snowstorm blows  
But it's warm, not bad;  
For some reason  
It heaps up joy.  
As if it smelt  
Of the distant spring;  
And while turning aside  
Sang like birds.  
It filled my soul  
With unexpected songs  
Of merry spring.  
It reminds me of you,  
Distant quite remote...  
But did it remind  
You — about me?

## Her Songs

A. VLADIMIROVNA

Her songs  
With earthly plenty  
Irritating in breadth  
Sea shanties, youth  
With heart flames  
Infecting bright love  
Filling heart;  
Her songs preserve:  
Brothers re-echoing  
All one's tenderness

— Translated from Russian by G. K. G. Joshi



## THE MAN WHO BECAME A GHOST

(Short story)

T. R. RAJAGOPALA AIYER

During the illustrious reign of the Caliph Haroon-Al-Rashid (on whom be peace), Ali Mustapha, a distant kinsman of the Caliph, was Sultan in one of the provinces on the Euphrates. Ali Mustapha was a gay and facetious young man and extremely popular with his subjects. Besides, he found much favour in the eyes of the Caliph who visited him frequently out of the regard he bore him. The kingdom was fertile and the subjects happy. But a strange vicissitude overtook the kingdom and it was in the manner following.

There was a small village called Kut-Amar on the banks of the Euphrates and in it lived a boatman, Al-Kerim by name. This Al-Kerim was a just and contented man and held in high regard in his village. Having one-day business on the other side of the river, he, with a neighbour of his, determined not to ferry in his boat but to swim across. It was the rainy season of the year and the river having drunk deep of the waters was swollen and flowed muddy and turbulent, but Al-Kerim, a practised swimmer from his boyhood, recked it not. When the pair of boatmen were in the middle of the river, kismet, or the will of Allah, in the shape of a tangle of creepers and moss which was floating by, caught hold of Al-kerim's feet, and the more he tried to free himself, the more inextricable became his bondage, until at last he was sucked in by a whirlpool. When Al-Kerim found his efforts useless and that he was being swept in, he cried out to his neighbour to save him. That neighbour who was a few yards ahead swam back at great risk and laid hold on Al-Kerim's clothes, but Al-Kerim partly on account of the bondage on his feet and partly not being able to float, he had become a dead weight, was carried away from his neighbour's grip, leaving his clothes in his hands. And Al-Kerim was seen no more.



The neighbour swam back to Kut-Amar straining his eyes over the waste of waters, if perchance he could see his friend rising and floating, but it was in vain. He then sadly went to Al-Kerim's house and intimated the death of the sharer of his joys and sorrows, to the latter's wife and children and kinsmen. The whole village went into mourning and there was much beating of breasts, rending of clothes, and throwing of ashes on the head, for verily was Al-Kerim held high in regard in his village. The neighbours comforted the wife and children and kinsmen of Al-Kerim and they caused to be made an empty coffin and carried it to the cemetery and buried it with due rites and the reading of the Al-Koran, as is the custom. Now only one thing troubled them and that was according to the accepted beliefs that Al-Kerim having come by a sudden and watery grave, would not find peace for some time, but would become a water-wraith or ghost and be tormented and torment others.

While Al-Kerim was thus decently buried in his village, Allah willed his fate otherwise. When he found all his efforts to free himself were of no avail and that he was being sucked in by the whirlpool, he held his breath fast and went down. He was swallowed and thrown up and swallowed and thrown up again. Retaining his presence of mind, he breathed and filled again and again, until at last a sudden burst of water floated him away from the whirlpool and landed him safe on the banks of a garden down the river. He extricated himself from the bondage which had almost cost him his life and then fell on his knees and devoutly thanked Allah the Merciful. When he turned his steps towards his village, he discovered that he was naked even as our forefather Adam was, and that he should beg or borrow a set from some kind neighbour or charitable stranger. In this he apprehended no difficulty. But since he could not appear naked in broad daylight he hid himself in some bushes and fell fast asleep with the exhaustion arising out of his buffeting with the waters of the Euphrates.

When he woke, night had set in and he felt sorely hungry. He made straight for the lodge of the gardener whom he knew well and peeping through the window he called the gardener and in two words asked him to give him clothes and food. The gardener had just then returned from the funeral of Al-Kerim where he had supped and drunk well, and the conversation had entirely turned on the after-state of drowned persons. It had been asserted, that if they had died naked as Al-Kerim had, their ghosts would always clamour for clothes first and then food.



The gardener just threw a glance at the wan face, of glittering eyes, and unkempt presence of Al-Kerim and uttering a shriek, fled through the backdoor, but being a cautious man, locked it behind him, lest the ghost should steal anything. Nor did he stop until he reached the local tavern where the villagers were holding a sympathetic carouse after the funeral. When the gardener burst upon the company, out of breath, eyes startling, face livid and all limbs a-trembling, the voice of revelry died and all crowded round the gardener who could not find his tongue from sheer fright and running. However, a few cups of the Divine restorer brought him round. And a reveller asked him "Gardener what is it that aileth these?" "You look as if you had seen Al-Kerim's ghost. Tell us, thy neighbours, what hath befallen thee and don't hold us so long in suspense." "You talk true, neighbour," replied the gardener solemnly.

"I saw his ghost as plainly as if I saw his living self. And the ghost beseeched me just for clothes and food. Now Allah be praised in that the ghost did not catch hold of me and kill me, which it might have easily done." And he told them in detail of what had occurred, with not a few of those inventions and embellishments, which the fact of his being a hero amidst such a sympathetic company and a ready wit and a fluent tongue, and wine, the Bright inspirer, suggested to him. And all marvelled greatly thereat and they discussed it long and loudly, and they sent for the rest of the villagers who heard the tale which did not lose anything in the repetition. And the night was a night to remember forever, and it became even like day, for none slept in the village that night, but they continued talking and discussing and drinking the red wine until morning broke. But one and all the villagers abjured the gardener to resign his post and not go near the haunted garden; nor could anyone be found daring enough to become the gardener of that accursed place. And so the garden fell into a neglect and decay and really became the haunt of Al-Kerim.

If the gardener was astonished at seeing Al-Kerim, the latter was no less at the frantic and inexplicable behaviour of such a good neighbour as the gardener. He had to turn back cold and hungry and somehow or other to spend the night. It was the cold season of the year and a chill fog lay about. He wandered disconsolately through the garden until he lighted on some fruits which he ate with avidity, and then seeing a bower and a seat thereon, he heaped dry leaves and laid himself amidst them, costly enough, and thinking many thoughts fell into a deep sleep.

Grown desperate in the morning, he resolved, as he was, to meet the gardener, but he did not find him, and sitting from



tree to tree, he was observed by the curious eyes of such of the villagers who were bold enough to peep cautiously. The gardener's story was confirmed and the garden was afterwards given a very wide berth.

All this bore very hard on Al-Kerim. He could not for ever subsist on the fruits, plentiful though they were ; but what troubled him most as a decent and worthy human being was his absolute want of clothes. He improvised some dry leaves to cover his nakedness. And a few days after, he formed the idea of visiting the house of the neighbour boatman and ask him a return of his own clothes. Choosing the time when he expected everybody to be in bed, he went straight to his neighbour's house and knocked at the door. "Who is it that knocks at this untimely hour?" growled his neighbour not fully roused. "It is I, Al-Kerim," replied the voice. "Will you just return me the clothes you took from me? You can scarce imagine my sufferings ever since that black day, which Allah wipe out from the calendar. I have been naked and cold ever since and I am also very very hungry. I would just like to have a good dinner. I have not known what a meal is for the past so many days." The pathetic words of Al-Kerim went into the heart of his brother boatman, but he was not to be so easily cheated and caught by a ghost. For everyone knows that it is the hard and unfortunate fate of these ghosts that they have no peace, and they wander about troubled and vexed until they secure some victims who would become ghosts in their stead, and then they are freed from their curse. Now Al-Kerim's neighbour was a shrewd man. So he lay quiet quaking in his bed, and not all the wheedlings or prayers of Al-Kerim could induce him even to open his lips, let alone opening the door and admitting him. Al-Kerim cursed his neighbour and his fate, and finally resolved to go to his own house. Here too he fared no better and for the same reasons. His wife and children loved him, alive and dead, but they were not going to immolate themselves for nothing for a ghost.

Bitter and desperate and cursing, Al-Kerim returned to his garden. He was not able to understand his treatment. The next night he determined to try other people in the same way and see whether they at least were kinder than his neighbour boatman and his own wife and children. But within that time the events of the previous night had been told to everybody, and Al-Kerim tried his luck in vain the next night and a few other nights following. Now Al-Kerim's visitations were so regular and were known so precisely that the villagers shut their doors early in the night.



Now there was a famous astrologer and magician in the village, Sulaiman by name, of approved learning and piety and he had been a friend of Al-Kerim. Sulaiman's foretelling and charms were renowned throughout the province, and it was even whispered that the great Caliph himself had envied Kut-Amar of the possession of so great a magician. He was driving a very thriving trade and had grown very rich and proud. With the advent of Al-Kerim's ghost, however, he was always pestered by people asking him as to the nature of the ghost, the extent of its powers and the best way of averting danger from it. Hitherto he had dealt only with the ghosts of hallucination, raised by the fears or wild imaginings of people, and casting them. An actual ghost was more than what he had bargained for, and what he heard of it frightened and baffled him considerably. And when the villagers in a body called upon him to exorcise the ghost from the village, he determined to secretly flee away. He had large possessions and it was not easy to settle his affairs suddenly, but he made haste and finished them in quick time. But the trying situation he was in, and the need for the utmost secrecy so preyed upon his mind and wasted him, that he grew careworn and thin and was like one haunted. His wife, the partner of his weal and woe, noted his altered condition and asked him, "Prithee, husband, what secret care preyeth on thy mind?" Long he resisted a confession of his ignorance and that he was an imposter, but his wife, a true daughter of Eve, coaxed and wheeled him so prettily, that in a weak moment he blurted out that it was the ghost of Al-Kerim that was sitting so heavily upon him. "But you are so well-versed in spells and charms that people acclaim you to be as great as Sulaiman the wise king of the Hebrews. Surely you can with a wave of your wand consign the ghost of Al-Kerim to the desert of Kobi" protested his wife proudly. "Wife, wife", sadly exclaimed Sulaiman, "thou art a woman and thou little knowest what I really know. Hitherto I have not been found out. If I stay here longer, I am likelier to be killed by this Al-Kerim's ghost than by anything else."

Now this Sulaiman's wife was a born gossip and no sooner had this talk taken place, than she called a council of her favourites and her slaves, and to them she communicated the fact her husband was engaged in working spells and charms infalliable so far, against Al-Kerim's ghost; and how when he consulted the Magical Mirror of the Future as to the issue of his fight with the ghost, it had been revealed unto him darkly that the ghost was endowed with such terrible and unheard-of powers that no human magic could avail in the least against it,



and Sulaiman himself, the greatest magician in the world, was likely to be killed in a shocking manner shortly. All her hearers huddled together and trembled sympathetically when they heard this. And such is the swiftness of the tongue, the babblers of things good and bad, that the whole province knew the story within the evening and stood poised awaiting the result of the conflict between two mighty supernatural forces — Al-Kerim's ghost on one side and Sulaiman the magician on the other.

That night, Al-Kerim, tired of rousing his friends at midnight, resolved to visit the village earlier. Sulaiman the magician was returning to his house after arranging for camels and ponies to convey him and his wife and their worldly goods, early next day morning before anyone was up. He was worn out with the strain and fatigue and he was glad to feel the steps of his house again. No sooner had he set his feet on them than he heard a hollow voice startlingly near : "Sulaiman, thou famous magician, peace be on thee. I am Al-Kerim, thy friend. Wilt thou not at least give me some clothes and food?" The voice was going to say something else besides, but this was enough for Sulaiman who shrieked aloud in sheer terror, "Al-Kerim's ghost! I am slain. I am slain. Wife, drag me inside and shut the door!" He rushed towards the door and his wife hearing the words, more terror-stricken than him, banged it so violently on her unfortunate husband's head while he was on the door step that his head got cracked and his body crushed by the violent impact. And then she dragged him bodily inside, dead and bleeding, and bolted the door.

When Al-Kerim heard the words "Al-Kerim's ghost," light dawned upon him for the first time as to the strange behaviour of people towards him. The comedy of the situation struck him so violently that he burst out into a loud and hysterical fit of laughter. repeating aloud "Al-Kerim's ghost! Al-Kerim's ghost!" and he continued violently laughing all down the street. Hitherto the villagers had been expecting the daily visits of the ghost at midnight, but when they heard the affrighted shriek of Sulaiman "Al-Kerim's ghost! Al-Kerim's ghost!" "I am slain", "I am slain", and when they heard the violent peals of laughter of "Al-Kerim's ghost", "Al-Kerim's ghost" succeeding and passing and echoing down the streets, they know that the worst had befallen Sulaiman, but they were so afraid that they shut their own doors and dared not stir abroad. As for Al-Kerim, when he got over his laughter, he made straight for the cemetery and there he found a newly-raised cenotaph. On the rather costly gravestone above, a



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after victim. And thus it was that when the luckless Al-Kerim, as a matter of fact, visited the village, he found it empty. He was now the sole and undisputed master of Kut-Amar; but of victuals the sustainer of the body, or of clothes the covering of the naked, he found nothing. The only thing now left for Al-Kerim was to attempt some other village and beg, borrow or steal a set of clothes and food. Once clothed, a few words of explanation from him as to the mistake of his death would set matters right, he was convinced. But the insuperable difficulty precisely lay in securing that one set of clothes and a hearer who would stand and listen to him. The problem of food became great. His hair had grown wild on his head and face and body, his nails long, his body tanned, and his eyes, through his living, in the gloom, keen and unnaturally bright. Even his friends could scarce have recognised him. Besides, he was a sociable man and used to company. The cutting off from all human intercourse affected him keenly, and added to it was the unjust aspersion of his being a ghost. He grew so desperate and aghast at the turn of events that he began to be afraid of his own company. Al-Kerim began to be haunted by his own ghost.

Al-Kerim hoped that the story of his being a ghost would scarce have spread abroad, but he was mistaken, and such was now the state of panic, especially after Sulaiman's death, that whole bodies of villagers fled away in alarm, at the least sign of his approach. He attempted distant and out of the-way places, but it was all of no use; his reputation preceded him everywhere. He then made straight for Bakistan, the capital where the Sultan Ali Mustapha lived, to make his woes known and obtain redress. When tidings of his unprecedented visitation reached Ali Mustapha, he was greatly perturbed. The affrighted people were flocking in daily into Bakistan from all parts of his kingdom, by one impulse. The problem of housing and feeding them was becoming acute. Soon there arose the rumour that Al-Kerim's ghost, not content with conquering the outlying portions of Ali Mustapha's kingdom, had taken the road to Bakistan with a diverse legion of ghouls, dives, afrits, geni and other accursed beings. Great was the confusion and dismay. The city was immediately put in a state of siege. Drawbridges were hauled up and there was no means of communication with the outside. The Sultan, however, took one precaution.

The commander of his forces was one named Rustum, who had won fame and distinction in the numerous wars against the Tartar hordes in the north. Him the Sultan sent with a picked body of cavalry to reconnoitre the movements of the ghost and its assistants. Now this Rustum, though a very lion, a veritable Rustum the son of Zal the white-haired, against mortal enemies,



quailed at the mere mention of things supernatural. He could not refuse his mission, but he took his company along a way where he knew he would not even hear the name of his supernatural foe, and making a speedy circuit, he returned at dusk to Bakistan and loudly blew his horn to the watchman on the gate to lower the drawbridge and admit him and his cavalry. He was congratulating himself on the success of his return when there darted before his eyes a figure, naked, shaggy and uncouth which raised its right hand aloft, uttered some sounds and attempted to seize the bridle of Rustum's horse. No doubt could exist but that it was Al-Kerim's ghost and Rustum shrieking madly plunged his spurs into the flanks of his charger. That noble animal, catching the same terror and maddened with pain, neighed in an unearthly manner, reared on its haunches and plunged blindly into the company. The other horsemen and horses caught the infection and there was such plunging and confusion that many horses were thrown down and trampled. A few leapt into the moat and were drowned. The remainder broke away, galloped furiously, stumbled in the dark and broke their bones. Rustum, the commander, was very early thrown down, trampled upon and killed. It was all over in the twinkling of an eye. Al-Kerim fled away in dismay.

The watchman on the battlement who had been about to lower the drawbridge was an eye-witness to the happenings, though he could not see things clearly on account of the darkness. He had seen a tall, gaunt, weird figure emerge from no one knew where, approach Rustum, heard the cry of terror from him and his horse and beheld the resulting confusion in the ranks, the blind melee, the death of so many gallant chargers and cavaliers, the plunging of the steeds into the moat, and others breaking away and getting lost in the darkness. He averted his eyes in horror and ran fast to the Sultan and told him of the wholesale destruction of the gallant Rustum and his company by Al-Kerim's ghost and his confederate fiends. It was now plain that the city was being beleaguered by the ghost and a whole host of its evil companions. That night, sleep, the assuager of pain and care, visited not the eyelids of any in Bakistan. The soldiers on the walls and the sentinels at the gates deserted their posts and ran home and there was none to reprove or punish them, for their officers too were afraid to venture out. The massacre of the city was expected every moment.

With morning, the Sultan wrote a pathetic letter to the Caliph Haroun Al-Rashid and sent it through two of his trusted and daring



envoys, through a secret tunnel. He had scarce hopes that their going would not be known to his enemy, Al-kerim's ghost, and intercepted, but he resolved upon it as a last expedient. The messengers, fortunately, fled in haste and reached the Caliph to whom they handed the letter. When the great Caliph read the epistle, his face grew black and tears rushed to his eyes and he was so moved that he bit his lips and rolled on the ground. The assembled viziers and emirs could not make anything out of it. However, the Caliph's beloved vizier Jaffer (on whom be peace) picked up the scroll, read it and when he had read and re-read it, he smiled. "Laughst thou, varlet, when by this time Ali Mustapha, the well-beloved, has been caught up by this accursed ghost and carried to the halls of Eblis (on whom be perdition)? But I have ever seen thee jealous of my favours to the Sultan of Bakistan." And bitter tears rolled down the beard of the Caliph. The vizier made a low obeisance to the Caliph and spoke soft words. "I pray that the grief and anger of the Commander of the Faithful, may get assuaged. I have heard on good authority that from the days of Sulaiman the wise, to whom Allah had given such powers that he could bind and loose the seven classes of all beings, human and supernatural (except the divine) by means of the wonderful cabbalistic talisman he wore, there was a contract between him and the evil friends that they would not put their steps into the territories ruled by the Commander of the Faithful. Hence your majesty may rest assured that Ali Mustapha and his subjects are safe. While a boy I had a nurse who was deeply versed in magic and she taught it to me. If it pleases the Caliph, I shall now go personally to Bakistan and relieve the beleaguered city." The Caliph readily assented enjoining haste upon Jaffer, who started immediately with a body of cavalry for Bakistan. It was again evening when Jaffer, the trusty vizier, arrived at the spot of the recent catastrophe. His bodyguard began to show signs of nervousness. He ordered his cavaliers to encamp, assuring them that his spells would protect them. Taking food and drink and clothes, singly Jaffer pushed his way into the woods from where the ghost had issued. Shortly after, the great vizier returned secretly to his tent with another shrouded figure and departed early the next morning for Baghdad, sending word to Ali Mustapha that he had conquered the ghost and was taking it captive to the Caliph.

At Baghdad that evening Jaffer presented Al-Kerim's ghost to Haroun Al-Rashid. And Al-Kerim was made to tell his story. And the Caliph laughed so loud and so long that the palace was shaken and tears trickled down his cheeks. And Al-Kerim found favour in the eyes of the Caliph who ordered him to remain by



his side in Baghdad and presented him a thousand dinars of gold. And whenever sleep did not visit the eyelids of the Caliph, he sent for Al-Kerim and asked him to narrate how he became a ghost. And Caliph Haroun Al-Rashid ordered that the story should be written in letters of gold and preserved for ever among the archives of his reign.

## THE RELEVANCE OF MODERN ART

DR. SHANTI SWARUP

### Wings of the Soul

K. T. NARASIMHA CHAR

If you give up the "I",

There is no heaven too high

For your soul-wings to reach:

If in the little world

Of self you sit incurled,

You'll still stand on the beach.

Poor transient bonds we prize,

Dust looks gold to our eyes,

Decaying flesh immortal!

When dear ones cease their pain

We beat our wings in vain

Against God's highest portal!

Who gives his all to others,

Who loves all men like brothers

Obtains the world's dominion:

He shall smell sweet like a flower,

Be bright as truth, of power

That dwelleth in no pinion!

Spread out your wings, O Soul,

The earth is not your goal,

This life is not the end:

Break through these fleshly bars

To where beyond the stars

Stands the Eternal Friend!



## THE RELEVANCE OF MODERN ART

Dr. SHANTI SWARUP

Art of India, in its historic role, has perhaps been the greatest communicator of beauty, rich both in the spiritual and human emotions. And because of its nearness to all aspects of the social and cultural life it has done so in a language that can reach and move most men. In course of time with alterations in values and expressions, even newer possibilities of transmitting beauty have also been explored. It is therefore tragic that we have today to ponder over the relevance of modern Indian art. It is said that much of modern Indian art is ugly aberration from what is beautiful, from what makes sense and the artists are blindly basing themselves on Western patterns. In fairness to the artists, it may be argued that their work reflects the spirit of the century, and in this era of internationalism every art movement, including the Indian, will eventually have to participate in the art movements coming also from the West. But it will also be argued that creativity in any age must have a valid purpose in our culture and must also have a sense of significance. It is with these reflections that we may try to look at modern Indian art with objectivity and understanding.

It was the 19th century that witnessed a turning point in the fine art traditions of the country. Till then art in India had travelled from the ideals of static repose of the classical era, to the conceptual forms refined in the spiritual imagination of a great people of the early medieval period, to yet a period of a delightfully decorative and lyrical loveliness bound with the life of the people of the later middle ages. But already in the 19th century India was losing grip of her destiny, and specially in the field of painting, the Mughal, the Rajput and the Pahari movements of Indian art were patering out through the impact of British culture and of the crude naturalistic products of Western art.

At the turn of the present century, however, a movement for national regeneration was in the offing. It ushered in a new promise for the future, and artists turned for inspiration to their own



cultural heritage. While Bengal took a start by taking themes from legend, literature and history of India, which the artists idealised in the manner of the later Ajanta phase, Bombay experimented with representationalism with a wider range of styles and treatment which did not exclude the Western techniques. But soon came a period when artists began to question the chauvinist nationalism of the Renaissance School and also the barren cosmopolitanism of the Bombay artists. They on their part tried to discover for themselves new principles of content and form which could be followed with advantage. It was a search in which a few succeeded, but those who did, showed the path to modern Indian art. Rabindranath Tagore gave birth to expressionism designing his compositions with extreme simplicity. Gaganendranath Tagore experimented with Cubism and studied the pictorial possibilities of light. Jamini Roy turned to the joys of folk culture which he expressed vigorously and coherently in certain basic forms and patterns. Amrita Sher Gill realised her artistic mission by synthesising a dramatic colour sense with deep sensitiveness to the anguish and pain as also to moments of fulfilment in the lives of the common Indian.

The door had thus opened up a new horizon. A number of artists saw the direction in which the art in India had started moving, and pursued that direction with intensity and integrity. However, a much larger number who also saw that opening just wondered off on the path with their own inclinations, their own artistic visions, sometimes with their own synicisms. It inevitably resulted in a vast outpouring of paintings and sculptures, not much of which was really modern in flavour or even aesthetically pleasing. But today the Indian cultural scene is flooded with these products. And as we look around we find that our artists are no longer conscious of the rich heritage of their tradition, but are so completely fascinated by trends of art in the West that they are eagerly emulating ideas and techniques from there. They have in fact become so much West-oriented that this situation appears perfectly normal to them and we see everywhere Western artistic awareness dominating the Indian scene even more overwhelmingly than what the erstwhile political domination had done.

What after all is this modern Western awareness? It is part of that larger movement which started about 1900 with the revolutionary thinking of the post-impressionist painters like Cezanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin who desired that representation of outer form and colour must be subordinated to the demands of emotional values. It led on to Matisse's fanatical pass on for the summary expression of form and movement in which the artist further subordinated natural representation



to formal design, and created a pattern of line and colour which should appeal primarily to pure aesthetic sensibilities. This outlook got exaggerated into Picasso's Cubism who, in order to give a greater reality and strength to things, seem cut up the natural forms into geometrical shapes and shuffled them arbitrarily. Soon the distortions of Matisse and the puzzle pictures of the Cubists developed a new pseudo-philosophy of art which altogether discarded the facts of vision in favour of something conceived in the mind because they said that art should be free as music to give emotional pleasure, without any appropriate association of material ideas. It has thus led to a demand that art should be abstract and not concrete, it should not necessarily be bound by space or time, and that it should depict not figures or objects but only the inner vision of the artist who need not bother about society. In this way it is the artist's own personality which should motivate him, it is his own style to which all things should be subdued, and it is his own private language in which he must speak. The appearance of this outlook was the expression of excessive individualism, a rejection of the traditional values, an abandonment of all that had gone before, and an adventure into the realms of tireless experimentation in accordance with still newer theories of the purposes of art.

This thinking was indeed a reflection of the intellectual climate then prevailing in Europe. At this time a highly industrialised and materialistic-minded society was alienating the individual from his natural surroundings. The human values were giving way to egoistic culture. Man felt that he was living in a hostile world where he must wrest everything he wants, even if it meant the destruction of the natural arrangement of things. Religion and classical philosophy were found wanting in capacity to provide answers to his problems and doubts. He was even questioning his own existence. The man in the West was thus existing in a state of tortured tension, and on terms of disbelief both with his past and his fellow-men.

Now when it is in this context that the art form is developing in the West, we may ask how far this situation has any validity for the contemporary Indian artistic activity. The spectacle of life in modern India, if superficially viewed, does show many similarities with the life and character of modern Europe. It has the same phenomenon of extensive industrialisation as in Europe, and consequently the same urbanisation which is characterised with organised selfishness, the unabated demand for new technology, the idolatry of money, the passion



for individualism and the severance of life from religion. To these we have added social changes by borrowing European institutions and ideology and developing an enthusiasm for Western cultural modes. But the fact remains that we have acquired only the surface adornments. The inner substance continues to be typically Indian, and we carry a rigid crust around us beneath which there is a living faith in our age-old ideals. Howsoever much European we may become, our food habits, clothes, customs and manners remain unaltered. We still identify ourselves with castes and sects, and find security within the confines of the family system. Religion still has a deep hold on our minds, the sanctity of rituals has not dimmed, and we crowd around Sai Babas, Yogis and the many kinds of Bhagawans on earth in ever-increasing numbers. We endlessly reminisce upon the wonders of our temples, frescoes and crafts; the dancing Nataraja still inspires our concept of art, and the classical dances and music keep life vibrant. Nowhere, therefore, is there any sharp break with the tradition, and nowhere has the Indian really abandoned his social and cultural moorings.

So in this background is it unreasonable to demand that contemporary Indian art in order to be modern must first be identifiable as Indian and only then as modern. Modernism does not mean rejecting the academic discipline, or refusing to acknowledge the sources of the national art activity. It also does not mean accepting a style for no other reason than that it is fashionable in the West, or going abstract and using a language which is mystifying, incoherent and unconvincing. Art to be good and genuine has to be conscious of its heritage and establish a living relationship with his own social and cultural background. Without it there cannot be any artistic integrity, only borrowing of mannerisms, either one's own or those of an alien origin which have their own underlying psychology, their own inner compulsions and problems. While it is useful to admire the art of the Western world, for it has conducted great artistic enquiries into the psychology of perception and the science of aesthetics, and having perfected techniques led to bold experimentations. It is also useful to remember that no artist who values more the technique than his own vision can really create a work of art that is to survive through the ages. Fortunately we have artists in our country who keep on revitalising their expression by outside contact, and yet feel they have a responsibility to the land and people they belong to, and thus boldly evolve comprehensible idioms which open for the spectators new areas of experience. Their work is original and vital. But they are in a microscopic



minority. The vast majority of the moderns in this country is tragically enough practising art with intensely individualistic insistence upon novelty, and projecting abstract sensational devices to startle or overawe the spectator. But their work lacks depth, insight and understanding. It is empty and unrewarding, an art of the escapist or of one who seeks fame overnight. Real art must provide a lasting intellectual and aesthetic stimulus; it must arouse a response among those who look at it. It must be an indispensable expression of human experience; and it must have a valid purpose in our culture. Art is always greater than its creator. It must, therefore, be a living organism, must remain socially subjective and grow out of the tradition which it takes a whole civilisation to evolve.

— Courtesy Akashvani

## Spiritual Path

Search of inner spirit is spiritual path  
Open to life of harmony, purity and truth  
Freed from desire, possession and bondage  
Seeks alone, in contemplation, joy supreme.

Austerity removes pleasure of senses  
Forsaken desires foster peace of mind  
Breaking family bonds releases reason  
With understanding self dawns wisdom.

## Materialism

Free-will gets release from destiny  
Prayer or petition shows insecurity  
Freedom from fear frees initiative  
Progress lies in activity creative.

— KOTA V. RAO



## THE VISION OF THE SACRED DANCE - II

( *Tiru - k - kuuttu - t - taricanam* )

From Tirumular's Tirumantiram

*Translated from the original in Tamil by*

K. C. KAMALAI AH

( Continued from the last number )

### The Dance of Golden Tillai

As with the seven universes as his cities,  
With the five ethers of old also as his cities,  
Keeping Shakti as His theatrical stage,  
The Luminous Supreme took to dancing His vogue. ( 28 )

In the company of the Dame enjoying the dance,  
As Teacher treading a path immersed in lofty pleasure  
The Lord arriving in the South,  
Danced a dance steeped in eternal bliss. ( 29 )

With the Almighty dancing flickers the flame in palm,  
The matted locks float. When He dances devoid of calm,  
The crescent moon jumps. While dancing o'er the universe,  
He dances to rhythm the Dance of Rhythm. ( 30 )

Worshipped by the faithful, the Lord danced in the  
Assembly Hall.  
That's the Dance of the Lord spanning the universe.  
It's salvation for one to reach the World of Siva,  
Verily the pinnacle of lofty wisdom. ( 31 )

The Sacred Feet of the Lord activate  
The world three times seven, the universes seven,  
The supporting schools of thought one hundred and eight.  
The paths blessed by the Half of Siva are four.  
The Lord executes His rhythmic dance of delight,  
Dancing with His other Half, the very fountain of life  
for all. ( 32 )



Corresponding to the vital centre and the outer parts of  
the body,  
Lies the Tillai forest flanked by the Himalayas and Lanka.  
That's the patent potent origin that energises,  
Hence the Omnipresent Lord of Tillai is the Supremest  
of Supremes. (33)

Between Kanya Kumari in the extreme and the Kaveri,  
Besides the seven mountains resplendent with holy  
bathing spots,  
As the cherished treasure of Vedas and Agamas are recited  
The never changing Southern world is pure. (34)

He dances to rhythm, dancing to the four paths.  
He makes the Vedas dance, dancing over the burning fire.  
He makes knowledge dance, dancing all over the universe —  
This Supreme God of the gods of unalloyed purity. (35)

He dances amidst the gods and dances on the theatre too.  
He dances with the gods of the Trinity and a galaxy  
of sages.  
He dances to the singing of sacred hymns as also with  
Parasakti.  
He dances in the hearts of the faithful, this King of Dance. (36)

The Lord of Six Faces He is,  
The Supreme Teacher of Faiths He is : So understood  
the faithful.  
On the Sacred Stage of the South,  
The Luminous Lord exhibits Himself fully integrated. (37)

In the court of the dancing stage,  
My Lord dances. His two Luminous Feet  
Emit two rays of light. To the reverberation of five  
melodies,  
The Lord of his own accord bestows Grace. (38)

The dancing foot, the sound of the tinkling bells,  
The songs that are sung and the varying steps,  
The form assumed by our dancing Gurupara —  
Find out these within yourself, then shall your fetters  
fall away. (39)

In the Hall of Diamonds, the Gem of Dancers,  
Pleased Himself dancing, witnessing which  
The very life melting the heart  
Flowed and permeated the limbs. (40)



**The Marvellous Dance**

The Form to brood over is that of the Teacher.  
 The Form-cum-formless is Abstract.  
 The Resplendent Tiripurai is none but  
 The Form-cum-formless Uma. (41)

The Sacred Path leads to the Hall of Wisdom.  
 The Teacher's Form must be treasured in thought.  
 To the Realised Souls, the Form-cum-formless  
 Is the Path of Grace, the ideal one too. (42)

Life's sphere of activity extends upto  
 Twelve finger-widths up above the head.  
 Seek ye, the arena dear to the Lord for dancing.  
 That's the Lord's Sacred Hall of Dance. (43)

As in the sky above, the wind, the cloud and lightning,  
 Rainbow and thunder are conspicuous by their appearance,  
 But are different from it,  
 Rivers of Delight and Light mingle but different from  
 each other.  
 The Lord conceals Himself in Light. (44)

The five beginning with fire, the eight directions, above  
 and below,  
 Stands Bliss beyond the comprehension of those who  
 can comprehend.  
 Visible to those who pass over Maya and Mahamaya,  
 Our Lord dances His eternal dance. (45)

The Dancer partakes along with the bangled Danseuse.  
 The Dancer partakes in undiluted bliss.  
 The Dancer partakes in undiluted knowledge.  
 The Dancer and Danseuse are after the dance. (46)

I've known Shakti, who has taken in Him a place,  
 And Our Heavenly Father, are in the midst of a dance.  
 They dance having in them deposited, vast and varied,  
 Living beings, the entire lot spread far and wide. (47)

The form of the Shakti is all delight —  
 The united delight is Uma's body;  
 This form of Shakti arising in time  
 And uniting the twain is the dance. (48)

Concentrating the gaze between the eyebrows on the  
 forehead,  
 Is the illuminating mantra.  
 That is where the Lord sits in court,  
 Joined by His devotees, I've learnt. (49)



- The worlds and their contents, the seven states  
Of Sadasivam, Sattavi and Sambhavi,  
That constitute the seat of Siva,  
The Supreme Luminous Lord pleases Himself dancing there. (50)
- The Hall of Dance is a luminous flower,  
Good and lovely of petals numbering  
One hundred and four and two hundred and ten.  
Such is the expanding land of the Lord. (51)
- The world numbering seven crores and the bodies  
seven crores  
The directions surrounded by waves clear numbering  
seven crores,  
The Lingas scattered all over the quarters numbering  
seven crores —
- These are the temples where the Lord of the Universe dances. (52)
- The sky is the body, Muyalakan the dark cloud,  
The eight directions are the lovely hands of the sage.  
With the three eyes as the three lights,  
The Lord dances with the mind as the stage. (53)
- The immobiles and the mobiles form His theatre.  
The Foot of the Supreme Lord is the theatre.  
The fire and the water regions are His theatre.  
The Five letters too become the Lord's theatre. (54)
- The powerful drum and the pipe mingled tunes.  
'Hail, Supreme Being!' leapt the human beings.  
The celestial horde sought after Him  
And the demons sang and lo, a Pandarangam! (55)

(To be continued)

## Notes

- (28) Five ethers — Ethers of the earth, water, fire, air and sky.  
(31) The world of siva — Tillai.  
(32) The four paths are : Cariyai, Kiriya, Yogam, Jnanam.  
(33) Tillai — A name of Chidambaram covered with a tree called Tillai (*Excoecaria agallocha*)  
(36) Gods of the Trinity — Brahma, Vishnu and Hara.  
(37) The Six Faces are : Isanam, Tatpurusham, Aghoram, Vamadevam, Sadyojatai and Adhomukham.  
(38) Two rays of light — Two lights of knowledge. Five melodies are : the subtle, the thoughtful, relating to the throat, hearing and making others hear.  
(39) and (48). As quoted in *Dance of Siva* by Ananda K. Coomaraswami.  
(45) The 3rd and the 4th lines as quoted in the *Dance of Siva* by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy.  
(53) Muyalakan : The dwarf symbolising evil.



## Search for National Identity in Early Modern Indian Poetry

### "ARUDRA"

Ancient India was a land of many nations. Any Indian classical dictionary will give the fifty-six names of countries of *Bharatakhanda*. Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Karnata, etc., were independent entities even in the Imperial days of Maurya and Gupta ages. Several consequent Muslim conquests did not unite the nations of India in a real sense. Local customs and manners prevailed and flourished from time immemorial, despite the triumphs and thrivings of many a lord and overlord. Conversions to the religion of the rulers either voluntarily or by force did not hinder the converts to incorporate their old traditions and values in their acquired faith. There were Muslim Commanders in Hindu kingdoms and Hindu Sardars in Muslim armies. Only a few courtiers but not the common people were touched with any cultural changes. Hence, there was no search for National Identity during the mediaeval ages or even in the first two decades of the nineteenth century.

The avaricious agents, the scheming senior merchants, the fighting factors of the East India Company secured *Firmans*, acquired rights to collect taxes, conquered territories and interfered in the infights of the Indian princes to sow the seeds of an empire. The later Governors-General expanded the gains. The victory at the Battle of Plassey (1757) gave practical sovereignty over Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the Company. By 1800 the old Madras Presidency was carved. The submission of the brave Rajputs and mighty Marathas was accomplished by 1813-1824. Assam passed under the Company's rule in 1829. Sind in 1843, the Punjab in 1849 and the Lower Burma in 1852. The Empire stretched from Pegu to Peshawar. Relinquishing its trading rights and monopolies, the East India Company acted as the administrative agency of the British Crown. Thus a superficial unity of India was achieved by the foreign hand.



To govern a land of such magnitude with different religions and diverse customs of castes, creeds and cultures, the East India Company required its Civil Servants to learn the local languages and through the knowledge of the vernaculars understand the land and the people. Ever since the inception of the East India Company, its Agents were transacting their business through the Indian interpreters and translators. The various *Brahmins, Vakeels, Hejeebs, Pundits, Munshis* and *Banias* of the Company were assisting the inquisitive white scholars to study the sacred books of the East and discover the ancient glories of India.

The several Indian savants employed as subordinate servants of the Company were rediscovering the spiritual unity of India in its physical diversity. A brilliant young Indian employed in the Company's service in 1804 rose to the rank of *Sheristadar* to the District Collector of Rangapur (now in Bangladesh), worked in that post for five years (1809-1814) and retired from the Company's service to serve his nation as pre-eminent spiritual leader, pioneering social reformer and progressive political figure. He was Ram Mohun Roy, the father of Indian Renaissance, who was made a *Raja* by the titular Moghul Emperor, Akbar II, to represent the decaying feudal interests to the British Crown and Parliament, but Ram Mohun represented the emerging new Indian nation to the Western world.

With the preachings of Ram Mohun Roy the search for the National Identity was initiated. By the word nationality we mean a historically constituted stable community of people, formed on the basis of common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. These requirements were not fully provided by Roy's *Brahmo Samaj*. The *Arya Samaj* of Swami Dayananda (1824-'83) was also partly contributory to the cause of National identity. The missionary zeal of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) instilled a new self-respect in the people and prepared the way for their self-assertion. But religious reform is no substitute for the National Identity. If one section of the people make their religion as the basis for the nationality, another section of people will certainly assert for supremacy of their faith. Thus Mohammad Iqbal (1876-1938) strived to reconstruct the religious thought through Islamic values. Even the Theosophical Society of Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott, which revived faith in ancient Hinduism, could become a force to reckon with only when its great protagonist Annie Besant identified and threw herself into the Indian National Movement, led by the Indian National Congress.



The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 and Allan Octavian Hume (1829-1912), a retired English Civilian, was designated as its father and founder but as C. Y. Chintamani observed the idea of a national assemblage for definitely political ends was conceived by a number of persons which materialised in 1885. The number of delegates, then called representatives, to the first session was only seventy-one and at the fifth session at Bombay it was felt necessary to restrict the number to 1,000 to be elected by different political public associations all over the country, but the membership increased each year.

When the Indian National Congress was carrying its "constitutional agitations" by submitting humble petitions for the development of self-government in India by the expansion of the Central and Provincial Legislatures with the admission into these bodies of a larger number of popularly elected Indian representatives with enlarged powers over the financial and general administration of the country and the British rulers said that "India was conquered by the sword and by the sword it shall be held." When the Moderates were meek, the Extremists were eager to preach the doctrines of self-help and the necessity of rousing the masses was felt. Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920) thundered in 1895 and questioned, "Whose is the Congress? Of the people, of the classes or of the masses?"

To arouse the masses, poetry is the best implement and appropriate meaningful words of a poem can become the slogan of the nation. "Vande Mataram" the immortal song of Bankim Chandra Chatterji (1838-1893) had become the anthem of the National Congress. The concept of Mother India had taken root. The several slogans of the Indian National Congress like *Vande Mataram*, *Swadeshi*, *Swaraj*, *Purna-Swaraj* and *Quit India* show the various stages of development in the nation's thinking. These slogans inspired the poets all over India and a rich harvest of national songs was the result. I can only speak of the South Indian poets in general and Andhra poets in particular and briefly refer to their contributions towards the search for a National Identity.

Chilakamarti Lakshmi Narasimham (1867-1946) was the very first prominent Telugu poet to plunge into the political mainstream. He was a regular visitor to all the sessions of Indian National Congress and a participant of the various District Conferences, since 1894. In the first conference of Godavari District, Chilakamarti composed and recited 14 verses and got a standing ovation. Like all the Moderates, Chilakamarti was also loyal to the Crown and in the prefatory verse



he praised the White Rulers for unification of India but in the rest of the verses he painted the burdens of bondage, miseries of the middle classes and the plight of the peasants and workers. He sang about the tyranny of taxes, troublesome bribes and need for action to achieve relief from servitude.

Chilakamarti's verses travelled the entire length and breadth of Telugu districts by word of mouth and many *Harikatha* exponents were singing these political verses in their devotional discourses to reach the people in those days of meagre mass communication media. Gurazada Venkata Appa Rao (1862—1915), the father of modern Telugu literature, who was writing in English in those days, was requested to translate Chilakamarti's verses into English.

When Bipin Chandra Pal (1858-1933), the fiery orator and inspired prophet of vigorous nationalism, toured the Telugu districts with his soul-stirring speeches, Chilakamarti translated five of his speeches and sang an impromptu verse, which became immortal:

India is a beautiful milch cow  
Indians are its lamenting calves  
whose mouths are tied very tight,  
milking away are the crafty cowherds white.

This single verse spread like wild fire and was written on the walls of Andhradesha. When Lala Lajpat Rai was deported to Burma in 1907, Chilakamarti came out with another inspiring poem:

To a man who serves his country with sincerity  
Prisons are moon-stone bowers  
fetters on wrists are garland of flowers  
wretched gruel is a soup of milk  
and coarse blankets are silk shawls.  
Our land of Bharat is a vast gaol  
all the natives are virtual prisoners  
If arrested and put in the jail O! brother,  
He is changed from one room to the other!

Gurazada Venkata Appa Rao, who did not aspire to join the ranks of Telugu authors, was mainly writing in English except for his play *Kanyasulkam* (1892) in Telugu, which he wrote to champion the causes of social reform and spoken Telugu. Gurazada was a keen observer of the national scene and was disgusted with the Moderates. He attended the Madras session of the Congress in 1908 and wrote an English article in a scathing satirical strain and published it in *The Hindu*. There was a parody in that indignant piece of prose:



Tell me not in scornful numbers  
 Congress is an 'empty' show  
 For though many a delegate slumbers  
 Seats are 'full' in every row.  
 Congress is earnest! Congress is real  
 Self-Government is its goal;  
 Acton said, a high ideal  
 Is always good for the human soul  
 In the Congress field of battle,  
 In constitutional strife,  
 Indulge internal rattle,  
 Never lift a chair for tife.

Lives of all Moderates remind us  
 We should wisely keep from crime;  
 Open sedition only finds us  
 Shelter in far-off clime.

Let us then line up and speaking,  
 Speaking at a furious rate;  
 Not always some benefit seeking,  
 Learn to be loyal and to wait.

Gurazada in 1910, at long last, had taken to writing in Telugu and in a brief but beneficial period of a mere five years, had enriched every branch of creative writing, be it a poem, play, short play, short story or essay, with his deep understanding of the medium and the contemporary problems. In his ever-green poem *Desa Bhakti* Gurazada started the search for National Identity and fully visualized its shape and scope. Since he was well acquainted with the Western political philosophy, he was able to voice the aims and objects of the nation. If it was Rousseau who had first identified the "nation" as the "people" not the sovereign, it was Gurazada who defined that a country means its people but not the mere soil and national wealth is produced from people's toil. Since Gurazada's *Desa Bhakti* was not chauvinistic in its tone, it took some decades to be identified as the modern manifesto of nationalism. Because the Communists in the 'Porties had popularised it, this great poem was suspect in the eyes of the establishment.

Rayaprolu Subba Rao (1892-1984) the leading "modern" Telugu poet, like Kerala's Kumaran Asan (1873-1924) was influenced by Rabindranath Tagore and was the harbinger of Romanticism in Telugu literature. The subjects taken up by both Rayaprolu and Asan were similar and the approach was same. Both the poets, besides their Romantic poems, had written lyrics of social concern. Rayaprolu's popular *Janmabhoomi* was popular instantly, because of its national chauvinism, which was befitting the mood of the people in the struggle for freedom.



Like Karnataka's B. M. Srikantiah, many Telugu poets, along with Rayaprolu, were translating poems from the English language and several patriotic verses were also seen among them.

If Kerala's *Mahakavi* Vallathol (1878-1957) was obsessed with the sad thought that Kerala was torn into three pieces — Travancore, Cochin and Malabar — he was equally sad that India was under foreign yoke. He sang about his native-land and motherland in the same breath :

Let our hearts thrill with pride  
On hearing the name of " Bharat "  
Let our blood boil in our veins  
On hearing the name " Kerala ".

Rayaprolu resembles Vallathol in this respect. He is the proud son of two mothers, *Bharata-Mata* and *Telugu-Talli*. It was the Andhras that first started the agitation for linguistic provinces and Rayaprolu, as the Poet Laureate of Telugu nationalism, sang the glories of bygone ages :

It was the Telugu language  
That transformed the Tamilians into musicians  
The swords made by us  
Could not be endured by our enemy hordes,  
Telugu culture was able to get people  
Take an abiding interest in her graces  
With her dark tresses the Telugu-land  
Made the earth a land of milk and honey.  
The great, glorious history of the Andhras  
Is not dead, is not dead,  
If you have any sympathy  
Tear our hearts, and see the vital spring.

This proud proclamation of Rayaprolu was recited by many persons on various occasions and the Telugus loudly applaud every time. Almost all the major and minor poets of that period, in their hundreds, followed Rayaprolu to praise the Andhra sub-nationalism.

Viswanadha Satyanarayana (1895-1976), who received the Jnana Peeth Award in 1971, sang about the *Andhra Prasasti* and *Andhra Paurusham* in the early days of the Andhra movement and equalled Rayaprolu in his regional rhapsodies. Viswanadha reminded his readers of the old days when the Andhras claimed the entire India as their empire. It was true that the Telugu-speaking people were enraged at being called as *Madrazees* by the unlettered people of the North. Even the well-lettered people ignored Andhras, since the great Gurudev Tagore mentioned only Punjab, Sind, Gujarat, Maratha, Dravid, Utkala, Vanga in his *Jana Gana Mana* (which is now the National Anthem of the Republican India) probably because of metrical exigencies the



poet omitted Andhra. This was and is still a source of unforgettable pain to the Andhras. Sri Sri (1910-1983) the leader of the Progressive School of Poets openly declared that Tagore was his allergy. Of course, this was at a much later date, but in the thick of the national struggle, the Andhras did not forget the greater priorities.

The wise counsel of Gurazada, who asked the people to look forward, prevailed. He said :

The good in the past is very much meagre  
If you lag behind you'd be a back-number.

Gurazada, like Punjab's Prof. Puran Singh (1881-1931) had the foresight to liberate the language from the shackles of pedantry before the country could be freed from the foreign fetters. He adopted the simple, middle class dialect and the easy *Desi* metres in his poetry to herald the New National Identity. Just as the Congress was dominated by the people of the classes at one time, the poets of the classes who could not discard their traditional classical metres, verbose word compounds and crafty coinage of phrases dominated the early National Poetry but with the advent of poets of the masses the complexion of the Muse changed. As Viswanadha pointed out, the poets of classes were sitting pretty on the shore and did not venture to go near the water to wet their feet. It was the poets of the masses, who jumped into the flood waters of the National Movement.

Basavaraju Appa Rao (1894-1933) was a true follower of Gurazada and did not attempt versification but sang the lyrics of liberation. But for the personal calamities and his premature death he clearly could have equalled Tamil Nadu's Subramania Bharati (1882-1921) in stature and sensitiveness. But the gap was filled by Garimella Satyanarayana (1893-1952) the brave bard of the masses.

Gerimella, after his graduation, was training for his L. T. degree in 1920. He heard the call of the country and give up his studies to plunge into the freedom fight. In folk metres and rustic idiom he wrote many songs. His famous song became the war cry in various stages of the movement :

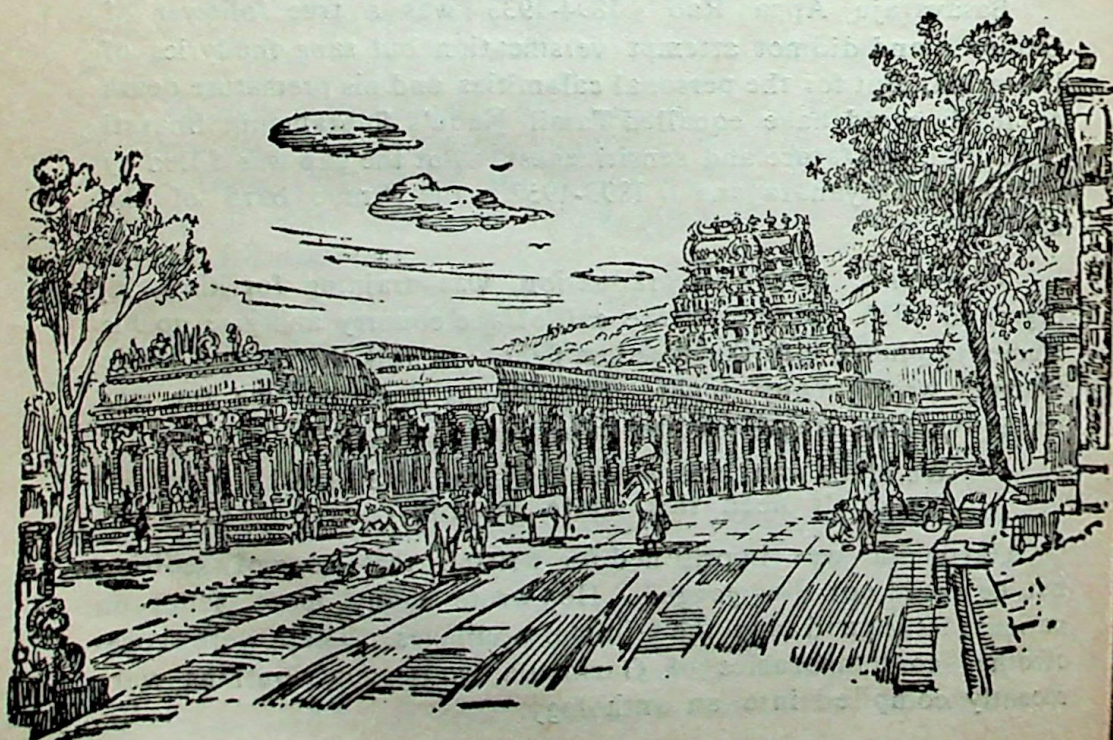
We don't want this white Bossism, Oh ! Lord !  
We don't need this white Bossism.

Garimella was imprisoned for writing this song of sedition but he could not be gagged. He wrote many more songs on national issues and sang them in many villages. There were scores of other contemporaries of Garimella whose contributions were recently compiled into an anthology.



The early modern poets visualised the national integration and Bharati's immortal song "In the glittering moonlit waters of River Sindhu ....." is the best example of that vision.

After achieving Independence and becoming a Republic, only a chapter came to the end. It may not be impertinent to ask the question whether the search for National Identity is over. Are we not facing new problems relating to the question of nationalities? Do we have a common language? Does our national ethos reflect the real state of our social life? Do the politicians, who thrive on regional rifts, chauvinistic clamours, caste and class differences, allow the nation to be united? Do our people still owe their allegiance to their families (*Kula*), caste (*Jati*), guilds (*Sreni*), corporations (*Gana*) and particular regions (*Janapada*)? Will the "modern" poets of the future continue the search for National Identity? This is really a very, very big question.





## THE RAMAYANA TRADITION IN ASIA \*

Prof. K. VISWANATHAM

The rhetorical remark of Kipling: "What do they know of England who only England know?" is applicable to the *Ramayana* of Valmiki. What do they know of the *Ramayana* who only know Valmiki? The polysemy or radiation of this Adikavya, though it is not as old as the Pali Kavyas, is astonishing. *Ramayanam anantakam*. Just as the Fable travelled from our country to the land of the Grimms and Hans Andersen, the *Ramayana* spread from the banks of the Volga to the Philippines. It travelled in space and it travelled in time from first century B. C. to the present day. It travels still; it has a self-propelling vitality; it renews itself in every age and clime: to adapt Casca's prophecy

How many ages hence

Shall this our lofty poem be acted over

In states unborn and accents yet unknown!

Brahma's verdict is incontrovertible and irreversible:

*Yavat sthasyanti girayah saritasch mahitale*

*Tavat ramakatha lokeshu pracharishyati.*

*Ramayana*-making is in the present continuous tense. Of course, there were voices of dissent. Buddhaghosha, the famous Pali commentator, dismisses the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* as useless and frivolous just as Ben Jonson dismisses Shakespeare's tempests and such drolleries. The Bengali poet, Madhusudan Dutt, said: "I despise Rama and his followers." Some moderns dismiss Rama as a mugwump and condemn the killing of Vali and Sambuka as unethical and indefensible and see in the unpardonable treatment of Sita the unceasing sob of a woman at the hands of male pigs. There is a felicitous propriety in the choice of this *Lokeshu pracharishyati* as the motto for "The *Ramayana* Tradition" in Asia edited by the late Dr. Raghavan.

\* *Ramayana Tradition in Asia*: Edited by Dr. V. Raghavan. Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. Price Rs. 75



The book is a compilation of papers presented at the International Seminar on the Ramayana Tradition in Asia in New Delhi in December 1975; it was published by the Sahitya Akademi in 1980, with a Preface by Shri Umashankar Joshi who promises a critical inventory of Ramayana Studies; it is a joint venture of the Sahitya Akademi and the Government of India. Scholars from eleven countries—Indian and foreign—over forty and authorities on the *Ramayana* lore in their respective countries and languages discuss the multi-mundity of the epic: in poem and play, in song and picture, in inscriptions and coins, in woodwork and stone, in dance and recitation, in shadow and puppet play, in scrolls and murals in India and further India. The monumental reliefs of Angkorvat and the temples of Prambanan in East Java and of Wat Po temple in Thailand hold a dialogue with the Kailasa temple at Ellora and the monuments of Vijayanagara and the Rama bronzes of Vadakkupayanur. *Ramacharitamanas* and *Iramavataram* speak to the Kakawin Ramayana of Indonesia, and the Thai Ramakien and the Malaysian Hikayat Sri Rama and the Chinese classic Monkey. The Eastern Archipelago was heavily Sanskritized or Brahmanized so much so the Thai monarchy required the presence of court Brahmans for the proper performance of ceremonials and the river Mekong means Mother Ganga.

Surprising are the variations of the *Ramayana* story in India and Greater India. The Ramayanas in Indian languages from the Kashmiri to the Malayalam are a legion. The singular is a lie and the plural is a fact. The *Ramayana* is part of the consciousness and conscience of the Hindus. A scholar remarks that between the covers of the First Folio of Shakespeare you have the whole of the English language. Between the covers of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* you have the entirety of Indian literature in Sanskrit and the regional languages. The epics are the quarry for later Sanskrit poets and playwrights and next only to Valmiki is the *Adhyatma Ramayana* which saints and enskies Rama. A hero becomes a God and a Kavya a scripture: devotees make a daily Parayana of *Gayatri Ramayana* or *Sundarakanda*. As Rajaji put it, one who has not read the *Ramayana* at least in a translation does not understand this country. To study the *Ramayana* is to know ourselves. Not to know me argues yourselves unknown. If any writing can make a mere man a Superman, it is the *Ramayana*. Goethe remarks that in reading the *Iliad* we are enacting Hell. In reading the *Ramayana* we are enacting Heaven. The *Ramayana* is the epic of attainable human excellence; it is the biography of the aspirations and ideals of the Hindus.



To one attuned to the loftiness of Valmiki the deviations or additions or adaptations in the various Ramayanas are distressing indeed! An Assamese poet Madhava Kandali defends tampering with the *Ramayana* on the ground that it is not Daivavani but a mere Katha.

In the Jain Ramayana, Sita is the sister of Rama and she becomes his queen. In Gunabhadra, Sita is the daughter of Ravana and she slays the hundred-headed Ravana whom Rama could not quell. In the Padmacarita of Vimalasuri, Ravana is a mighty king. Hanuman is related to him, Lakshmana kills Rama and goes to hell! Ravana's ten heads are reflections in a jewel. Sita tired of Samsara begs Rama permit her to do penance. The Jaina Ramayana versions are said to be an attempt to bring in an element of rationalism in the fantastic story of Valmiki! In Malayalam there is the Patala Ramayana making Hanuman the hero and in Sitaduhkham there is the folk story of the drawing of Ravana by Sita and Rama's suspicion of her chastity and her banishment. In Telugu Ramayanams we find several non-Valmikian episodes: Indra crows like a cock near Gautama's cottage; Lakshmana asks the goddess of sleep to approach Urmila till the exile is over; he draws seven lines near the hermitage warning Sita not to step beyond; Jambukumar the son of Surpanakha is killed and hence her vengeance; the squirrel helps Rama in building the bridge; Vibhishana discloses the secret of Amrita near the navel of Ravana; Angada drags Mandodari to disturb Ravana's Homa; Rama's birth is on a Wednesday; Ahalya becomes a stone; the story of Kalanemi and Lakshmana's laughter are other additions.

In both Kambar and Tulasidas there is the un-Valmikian pre-marital love between Rama and Sita and this is also found in Thai Ramakien. According to Tulasidas, Ravana carries away the illusory Sita and Sita is not exiled. The Bhusundi Ramayana is largely influenced by Sakta and Buddhist Tantric code. Rama becomes an amorous hero. In Kashmiri Ramayana, after the Agnipariksha, Sita refuses to open the doors in spite of Valmiki's recommendations and Rama's entreaties complaining about the wrongs done to her. The Bengali Ramayana of Krittivasa represents the hostility of Ravana as the highest type of Bhakti in disguise and in Ramalila Jhumuru, Ravana carries away Sita to Lanka and treats her as his own mother. The Oriya Ramayana is characterised by a striking similarity to the Idonesian Rama literature and by deviations and stories of the mushrooms (Ravanachchitra), of the crane, the chakravaka, the cock, the milkman, the sabara, which are popular myths in



Orissa. When Vali was born, half his strength was distributed among seven trees surrounded by a Naga, as Brahma felt that the universe might not bear the burden. In the Assamese Ramayana, Kunji the hunchback (Manthara) expresses a violent carnal desire for union with Bharata. In the Simhala Ramayana, Sita gives birth to a son, not twins, but Valamiga or Valmiki saddles her with two more and all three live happily in Malaya country. Sita in another story is one of the seven goddesses bathing at a pond; Vishnu secures the clothes of this goddess and makes her his wife. In the Burmese Ramayana, Hanuman brings back Sita after the burning of Lanka. In the Japanese Ramayana, Ravana is the king of dragons, Nagraja and the story of the hermit's son slain by Dasaratha has a happy ending. In Mongolian Ramayana, Rama is identified with the Buddha and in a Tibetan version Rama is unable to find out the king of demons in a crystal palace because of the reflections till Hanuman helps him.

Wayang Siam, a Malay shadow play, mentions the transformation of Rama and Sita into monkeys. Sita becomes a man and marries many princesses. Rama is seduced by Surpanakha and sets up as a householder! Lakshmana is a hermaphrodite and Hanuman begets sons. In a Malay Fairy Tale based on the Ramayana, Kusa and Lava are the monkey sons of Rama and Sita, and Lakshmana is the elder brother of Rama. Ravana has seven or twelve, not ten, heads, he changes himself into a lizard to get into Vishnu's grotto or Indra's to seduce his wife. In the Hikayat Seri Rama, Hanuman is the son of Srirama and Sitadevi through Anjatidewi. In the Hikayat Maharaja Ravana, Rama wins Sita by shooting an arrow through forty palm trees. Lakshmana is the monkey son of Radia Mangandiri or Rama by Langawi Queen of the East who swallows the testicle gored out by carabao of Mangandiri mistaking it for a gem and becomes pregnant.

In this welter of Ramayanas, Valmiki would have been puzzled and a bit distressed. Does not this acculturation stain the white radiance of Valmiki based on: "*Dharmo rakshati rakshitah.*" It is sad to note in this scholarly publication many errors and misprints. "*Aneka dantam bhaktanam...*" is translated: "You Ganesha have many teeth and we thy devotees want one of them." This is ignorance of Samskrit and English. Beowulf is said to be a German Epic and Virgil's epic is Punic War. Ravana is the God of winds. There are numerous instances of slipshod English: "When a bullet in a tiger hunt is described, a modern time rushes in to look on the story." But these lapses do not take away the value of this fine volume to students of Ramayana studies.

Perhaps the finest remark on the *Ramayana* theme and the *Ramayana* redactor, translator diaskeuast, exegete, poet, rhapsodist



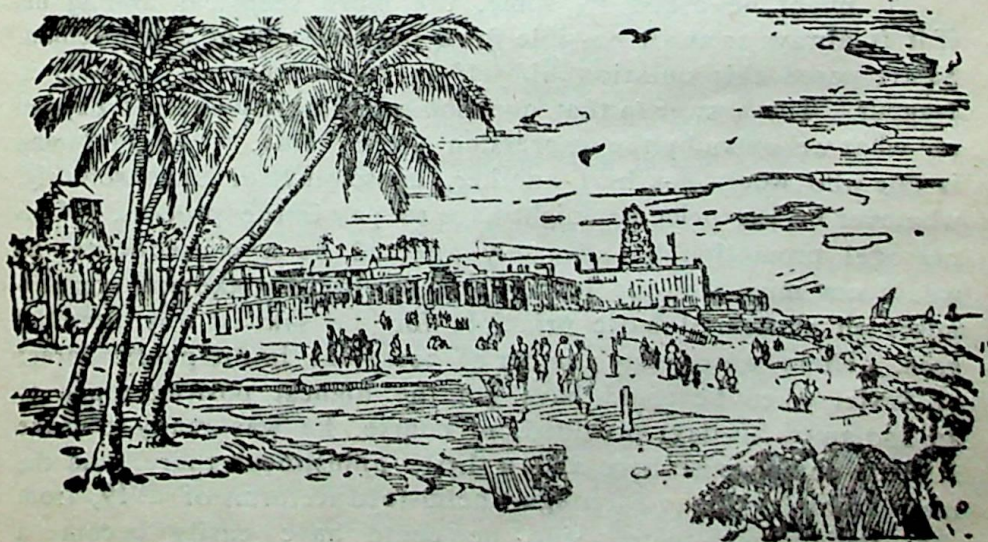
or guslar is the following from the *Padma Puranam* (1-12-15): "The Rama stories are an ocean; what can one like me, a mosquito, do? Still I shall have to deal with it according to my capacity; in the wide sky each bird flies according to its capacity. The Rama carita is a hundred crore of verses; according to one's intellect one writes about it. The fame of Rama will purify my mind even as fire, the gold." And wherever Rama story comes the spirit of Valmiki, genuine or modified or even distorted and torsioned, is behind it as a woman is said to be behind any great achievement:

*Teshu teshu puraneshu mahabharata evacha  
Yatra ramacharitam syat tadaham tatra saktiman.*

The *Ramayana* is a contemporary book. It is daily enacted in our lives. It is the Epic of "both man and bird and beast."

He prayeth well who loveth well  
Both man and bird and beast.

The remark made at the beginning: "What do they know of the *Ramayana* who only know Valmiki?" has to be supplemented by the remark: "What do they know of Valmiki who only know the other Ramayanas?"





## V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

### Hero as a Gentleman

Dr. D. ANJANEYULU

*(The Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, who was born on 22 Sept. 1869, died on 17 April 1946 )*

Here was a many-faceted personality. Teacher and educationist, informed patriot and elder statesman, man of letters and interpreter of the classics, the Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri was one of our great nation-builders. His name has been a byword for persuasive eloquence in his time. He was hailed as a silver-tongued orator not only in India, but throughout the British Empire. But there is, to my mind, one expression that could truly sum up his character more than any other. He was a gentleman. If Thomas Carlyle had heard of him, he might well have added another chapter to his celebrated lectures on "Heroes and Hero worship." He would probably have called it: "Hero as a gentleman." For, Sastri was a gentleman first, gentleman next and gentleman last.

It might be asked by some, the more sceptical among us, if it is always or at all possible for a politician to be a gentleman. Sastri posed this question himself in an address to students in Nagpur. The answer to that question might partly at least depend on what we mean by the expression "gentleman." A gentleman is one who would not hurt another, consciously or unconsciously, whatever be the price he might have to pay in the process. If his personal promotion be adversely affected as a consequence, he would not mind it in the least. Nor would he make any compromises on matters of basic principle for the sake of any personal gain. There were many number of occasions in the public career of Sastri when he could have got the highest position open to an Indian of his day, provided, of course, he was ready to make a little compromise here and a little adjustment there. As the main architect of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919, from the Indian non-official side, he could have easily become a



member of the Viceroy's Executive Council (let alone the Governor's Council) if only he played safe by keeping his silence. But he rather chose to speak out his mind on the Rowlatt Bill, the Introduction of which no self-respecting Indian could tolerate. The result, not so surprising in such cases, was that someone else (Sir B. N. Sarma) was preferred for what was justly his due. But he had no regrets on this score.

A gentleman cannot be a place-seeker. Nor would Sastri accept a place, even when it was offered without his seeking it, so long as he felt that he would not be true to his task, namely service to the public cause, according to his lights. The presidency of the Imperial Legislative Council (a sinecure post that would attract most politicians) was offered to him, but he would have none of it, as he would no longer be free to serve as the spokesman of the people's grievances, if he accepted this job. The whole of his political career may well be taken as a telling illustration of the statement that it is not impossible for a politician to be a gentleman.

When knighthood was a matter of signal honour cherished by most of his Liberal colleagues and other contemporaries, it was left for Sastri to decline even higher titles from the British Government, like KBE and KCSI. The only honour he ever chose to accept was the companionship of Honour, apart from the membership of the Privy Council, which stood in a different category. He was responsive without being loyalist. Though he was a Moderate, with a deep-rooted belief in constitutional methods of agitation, Sastri preferred to keep his options open both with the British Government and with his Indian colleagues.

A Liberal he was, no doubt, from the beginning of his political career (in 1907) to his last day (in 1946). But Sastri chose to spell his "liberalism" with a small "l." Like most Indian Liberals of the time, he was bred on the 19th century British classics like *Mill on "Liberty"* and *Morley on "Compromise."* In his case, however, liberalism was not a matter of political strategy or public stance but an article of personal faith. It involved the seeing of the opposite point of view as clearly as one's own, perhaps clearer still as critics used to say, half in jest, of Sastri. "There is nothing in the world equal to an understanding of those from whom you differ", he wrote to Mahatma Gandhi on one occasion. And these words could be taken to reflect his Liberal approach to political opponents. No better illustration of this approach could be found than in the relations between Gandhi and Sastri. They had some of the most fundamental differences in the world (beginning from the Civil



Disobedience Movement to non-cooperation in the war effort and so on), but no two other political leaders could claim to have understood each other so completely. They were the best of personal friends. They were like brothers, in the hallowed spirit reminiscent of the *Ramayana*.

Another attribute of a gentleman is integrity of character, intellectual as well as moral. This could be claimed for Sastri with no qualification whatsoever. Intellectual integrity, by stretching its meaning a little, could also mean a quest for perfection. In the case of Sastri, this seems to have started fairly early in his life. Sprung from a family known for its adherence to orthodox Hindu tradition, he was able to master the nuances of a foreign language that came from a totally different cultural tradition. His devotion to the deeper harmonies of the English language had a spiritual dimension, as it were, to it, as with the efforts of all seekers of knowledge from time immemorial. In his college days, it expressed itself in an uncommon obsession with the Webster's Dictionary. This was a magnificent obsession that persisted till his dying day.

The incident from his Teachers' college days in Saidapet (in 1891) is best told in the words of his biographer, Mr. T. N. Jagadisan (who had played the Boswell to his Johnson) (Page 8):

"One day, the Principal of the college, Mr. A. A. Hall, in setting out to teach his students good elocution and correct pronunciation, himself mispronounced three words placing the accent wrongly on them. Srinivasan, who had been actually complimented by the Principal on his own good pronunciation, created a sensation in the class by pointing out his Principal's errors in pronouncing "magnificent", "formidable", and "execrable." Hall claimed he had pronounced the words correctly. A dictionary was brought to the class and Hall's incorrectness was established. It is noteworthy that Hall took the incident in good part and Sastri did not have to suffer for it."

On his reputed mastery of the English language, suffice it to say that Sastri spoke not like any Englishman did, but as the best-educated Englishman ought to speak it. Of how many others can this be said? Ramsay Macdonald, Prime Minister of England, at one of the Round Table Conferences, is known to have confessed: "After listening to the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, I hesitate to speak my own language." David Lloyd George, a political orator of matchless skill, was all admiration for the Sastri style of speaking. While university dons took his speeches as models of pronunciation, newspaper editors in London used to instruct their editorial staffs to study them for improving



their idiom and syntax. This was a rare feat indeed for an Indian in the annals of English elocution.

Restraint is often praised as a classical virtue, but it is not easy to acquire for a full-blooded man in the thick of political battles. It is true that Sastri did not snort like a war horse (in the manner of a Churchill) nor was he eager for crises of any kind. He did, however, face them in his own way as a gentleman trained in the only school for restraint then available, otherwise known as the Servants of India Society. He gladly undertook to obey the interdict on public speaking and writing for the first few years, imposed on him by his political Guru, G. K. Gokhale. But he had to exercise his capacity for restraint in other respects too.

One example relates to an incident that occurred in Calcutta, when he was assisting his master Gokhale in his work as a member of the Indian Legislative Assembly. It is related by the late Mr. P. Kodanda Rao in *Srinivasa Sastri — a Political Biography* :

“On one occasion, he was refused admission to the Legislative Chamber by the European sergeant at the gate, on the ground that he was not ‘properly dressed!’ (by which was meant that he was in his Indian-style dress) Hurt by the insult to the *dhoti*, Sastri returned home and cogitated whether he should request Gokhale to make an issue of the dignity and status of the *dhoti* then and there, or let him concentrate on his Education Bill and himself submit to the indignity of a pair of trousers and shoes! Finally, he chose the latter alternative, consoling himself with the thought that one day the *dhoti* would come into its own in the highest social and official circles in India. Next day he presented himself in trousers and shoes, and was readily admitted to the Legislative Chamber.”

He was ever prepared to relegate his pride and personal dignity to a second place, giving the first to national interest and public good. This naturally meant a lot of strain on a man of such self-respect and sensitivity. Mahatma Gandhi often used to stress the point that non-violence was a weapon of the brave, not of the timid. By the same token, restraint in Sastri was not a sign of weakness or an alibi for inaction or personal cowardice. He was a man of great moral courage, and in this respect was comparable only to the greatest in the land like Gokhale and Gandhi. It is worth-remembering at this distance of time that he was often critical of the



policies of the British Government — on various counts such as Salt Tax, the Services and the role of the Bureaucracy, which could nullify the substance of the reforms by its tardiness and prevarication. He did not hesitate to tell the powers that be a thing or two when he felt it was in the public interest to do so. Describing the temper of the Indian people in 1920 or 1921 (may be soon after the Jalianwala Bagh tragedy), at a party given by the Viceroy in his honour on the eve of his departure for England, he could say :

“We have never seen in this country such a wreck of hope and faith in the government of the day. We have never seen such a total wreck of faith in the people as today.”

And yet, in the course of his speeches in London (including the famous Guild Hall speech) he could give voice to his unmistakable faith in the ultimate values of liberty, equality and human fellowship that, in his eyes, inspired the British Empire at its best, transcending the boundaries of geography and nationality and the distinctions of race, colour and creed.

Not that Sastri was unaware of the other side of the medal. He was gentle and restrained, never naive or insensitive. He knew enough of the imperial game to be able to tell his audience in Canada in a fit of loud thinking:

“Its (the Empire’s) strength has been built upon our weakness, its riches have been accumulated by keeping us poor, its power in the world has been possible because our strength could be used, subordinated to their strength.”

This is not the tone typical of a loyalist petitioner or of a time-serving favour-seeker. He knew the British rulers at their cynical worst as well as at their sympathetic best. He also knew that hard words break no bones. There was obviously an element of political deliberation no less than of intellectual sophistication in his sustained attempt to put the Englishman on his honour, and leave him with the choice of living up to his own built-up image in India and elsewhere or have it shattered in the eyes of the world. He never gave up hope, though he was prepared for successive disappointments. He, however, tried his best not to allow any disappointments to lead to frustration and bitterness.

When we think of Sastri, we cannot help thinking of three other attributes of a gentleman. They are — *humility, humour and humanity.*



Humility is, perhaps, no longer considered an attribute of any modern man, let alone a gentleman or a great man. One comes across few men who think they had made a mark in life who are not absolutely convinced of their own greatness, be it actual or potential. It is no doubt understandable that humility is no virtue in an age of advertisement and self-advertisement. To be humble or modest is but to be ignored by friends and foes alike as a nonentity in this world. But we still get men like Gandhi, Einstein and Hammaraskjoeld who prove, by example rather than by precept, that greatness can be humble, without being ineffective.

Sastri belongs to this rare category, which is growing rarer still day by day. Mr. N. Raghunatha Aiyar, the eminent journalist and scholar (who was for a long time on *The Hindu*) described his first introduction to the Rt. Hon. Sastri in Mount Road thus. The Rt. Hon gentleman (who was then president of the SIS and leader of the Indian Liberal Federation) walked up the steps of the winding staircase to Mr. Raghunatha Aiyar's room and stretched out his hand, announcing himself in the words: "I am Srinivasa Sastry of the Servants of India Society." There was no trace of pretension or false humility in this gesture, Mr. Raghunatha Aiyar told his listeners.

It was neither in Sastri's nature nor in his code of conduct to push himself forward to the front row in any public gathering. This statement could be metaphorical no less than literal in its application to Sastri. Experts in psychoanalysis of the present day might rack their brains to get at the root cause of this behaviour. They might speak with a learned superiority of "Inferiority complex", "Inner sense of insecurity", "Low degree of motivation" and what you will. But Sastri was impenitent in his humility.

One does not know if anyone has counted the actual number of 'I's occurring in the speeches and writings of Sastri. But it could be a safe guess that the percentage (of recurrence of the First Personal Singular) must be about the lowest among his contemporaries. Elementary rules of English idiom, recommend that "I" and "Me" and "Mine" should come last in any personal group in a sentence. It is common knowledge now that the *First Person Singular* takes the highest priority in speech and writing.

Closely linked with Sastri's humility is his humour. Countless are the jokes he used to crack against himself. They are antidote to the slightest trace of vanity or portentousness in himself or the suggestion of it in others' minds. How many of us remember



that he had at least one honorary doctorate ( may be more, I am not sure ) to add to his name? But he did not use it. ( There are others who would hardly allow us to forget that they are doctors of literature or doctors of philosophy, even if it be *honoris causa*. What is more, their official subordinates might well incur their wrath and make themselves liable to suitable punishment if the honorific prefix of vicarious learning is omitted, even by oversight ! ) There are only a few names like Dr. Radhakrishnan, Dr. C. V. Raman, Dr. C. R. Reddy and Dr. Rajendra Prasad for which the prefix " Doctor " sounds apt and well-earned, though it is honorary in each of these cases.

Sastri, like Rajaji, Nehru and others, never used his doctorate. On the other hand, he made light of it. It was in August 1932, that the Madras University conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws on Sastri at a special convocation. He could not attend it. Relating this incident to a lady friend of his, Sastri says in his letter :

" Beware how you address me hereafter ... the only fly in the ointment is the expensive robe one has to buy ... Like the society lady's wedding dress, it has no use beyond that occasion. If you can make something of the material, please apply promptly ! "

If humanism means a deep involvement with human affairs, and the mind of man, Sastri could be described as a humanist. One need not go into the question if he was an agnostic as well and remained so till the end of his life. At one stage, he certainly called himself an agnostic, who had imbibed the rationalism of T. H. Huxley and J. S. Mill. For the best part of his life he was not prepared to accept any personal convictions from others on trust or suspend his own judgment in favour of anybody else's. Those who had listened to his Ramayana lectures, especially the concluding one in the series, however, can be seen to be eager to enlist him in the fraternity of faith to which all of them are happy to belong.

Even so, Sastri can hardly be labelled a conventional man of faith. He had no use for the rituals and ceremonies and all the other outward insignia of traditional religion. He was a man of no easy faith, as Mr. Jagadisan takes care to emphasize in his book. His faith was the result of agonising appraisals and reappraisals. It was the end-product of a lifetime's felt experience. Even the moving exhortation for the enthronement of Rama and Sita in his listeners' hearts was an acknowledgement of the perfectability of human beings rather than the routine call of piety by a man who practised religion by rote.



Was Sastri a man of action? Not in the sense in which one usually understands this term. He made no secret of his age-long habit of weighing the alternatives nicely in the scales of his mind before coming to a conclusion. It was often a time-consuming process and by the time he came to a decision, the time for action might have passed him by. Referring to the British Governor of an Indian province, who had been a radical in English politics, Sastri said :

“He was a typical conservative, a perfect Hamlet of politics. But surely deliberation is not indecision. It will lead to action quite as often as to inaction. And the action to which it leads will be safe and suited to all the attendant circumstances.”

The balanced mind was prized by Sastri even more than an alert and elastic mind among the attributes of university culture. Yudhishtira, rather than Bhima, was his model as a conscientious politician. The historian of the Congress, Dr. Pattabhi, said : “Sastriar was content to remain a back-bencher in Councils though he loved to praise the cross-bench mind.” Sastri was unrepentant in commending the value of a cross-bench mind. He looked upon it as “the crown and summit of liberal education.”

Those belonging to the generation which knew the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri or heard him from a distance admire him for his eloquence, for his erudition, for his integrity and for his patriotism. When his virtues are listed and his achievements are recounted, his image might come to this generation as all-too-bright, larger than life. But one can ill afford to forget that Sastri was a human being, with all the weaknesses as well as the strengths of a human being. He was no copybook saint. Thank God! We can only love him the more for it. He was warm-hearted; but the decorum of a lifetime trained him not to wear his heart on his sleeve. He loved the good things of life, without being a hedonist. He was no ascetic by nature; but he grew up to maturity in the school of discipline and self-abnegation. Money did not mean much to him. He never had enough of it. Like William Pitt the Younger he died poor. But we are the richer for the fact that Sastri lived amidst us once.





## REVIEWS

*To the Best of My Memory* : By P. B. Gajendragadkar. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Price : Rs. 40.

It is not easy to write about oneself. The objectivity required to render the account interesting may not always be found. Save a few instances in our country, such as that of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, autobiographies by outstanding publicists have either been a good collection of reminiscences or a recollection of public events and official recordings without much of private incidents or domestic details to relieve the mere march of episode after episode concerning oneself. Therefore, it is a matter of satisfaction that Dr. Gajendragadkar's book of sumptuous memories of his life and activities, despite more often events connected with his official and public life, does not weary us owing to his capacity to retain the reader's attention by the manner of his recounting them.

Indeed it is a life full of bright early academic successes and gradual rise both in the profession of Law he carried on, as well as the judgeship of the High Court of Bombay and the later Supreme Court's Bench which he occupied with great distinction. There is a charm in his method of narration about himself; he is not suffering from a false sense of modesty, while at the same time striking us as not vain or self-conscious. From the many glimpses he provides of his meetings with other important individuals of rank and importance in the country, he easily prepares us for the estimation in which he was held by them, notwithstanding his confrontation sometimes with the very persons for whom he had great regard, with an independent outlook which hardly brooked slovenliness of any kind or indifference to legitimate claims on probity and straightforwardness in public life.

Some of his assessments of men and affairs really supply us with what he considered as high standards of ethical conduct. Apart from genuine feelings of proportion and balance in his views of national policies, his outright solutions to some of them,



especially in the fields of labour and education as expressed in the various reports of Committees and Commissions he presided over, make us understand his thoroughness and unusual frankness in discussing them.

Otherwise too, the book is a mine of information about the workings of the High Courts and Supreme Court where his part in shaping the administration had not been insignificant. For nearly twenty years he was a judge and knew what the needs are in the cause of litigations in our country. Some of his points for betterment of judicial service as also the universities which he had elaborated in the course of these pages, mark his real devotion to Courts as sacred spots for justice and impartiality being dispensed with.

Maybe he could have given insights into his private life which evidently he had to eschew in the attempt more to bring before the public the spirit and moral elevation which should aid anyone placed in positions of responsibility towards a country with its ambition to become a worthy nation among the more forward countries of the world.

Having been a Sanskrit scholar, his undertaking of the publication of the ten main Upanishads for the Bevan Library with English translations along with the chief commentaries of Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva and Vallabha shows what an amount of earnestness he could bestow upon intellectual pursuits. On the whole it is a book which retains the reader's interest throughout its 400 odd pages. The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan should be congratulated for the faultless proof-reading they have accomplished in ushering in a volume of this valuable kind.

— K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

*Gita Saaroddhaara* : By Swami Visvesvara Thirtha. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Price : Rs. 60.

These are talks on the *Bhagavat Gita* delivered by H. H. Sri Visvesvara Thirtha, Head of the Pejavar Mutt. Originally they were rendered in Kannada to Hubli audiences and collected in book in 1967. Now, finding them of merit enough to be spread to a wider audience, the present translators have published an English version of the same. The translation has been done with care and efficiency.

The entire theme emphasised in these lectures is of the message of the Gita as of selfless action and complete devotion to the Supreme Being. Karma Yoga and Bhakti, according to the Swami, have to be of constant assistance if one wants salvation from the coils of Samsara. Declared thus, the Swamiji :



"I have followed the commentaries of Sri Madhwacharya not out of any sectarian attachment. I have tried to place the Gita in the light of Sri Madhwacharya's commentary, only because I am fully convinced after an unprejudicial, undogmatic and open-minded inquiry, that the heart of the Gita is truly reflected in his commentary." Hence the interpretations he has given bear out the philosophical trends of Dvaita. Replete with references to many other sources such as the Upanishads, Bhagavata and Puranas, the Swami has unequivocally filled the talks with appreciation of the teachings of Sri Madhwacharya. So also he has to criticise other systems of philosophy, particularly Advaita. So he says, "When it is clear when the final consummation of life can be obtained by the devoted worship of Saguna Brahma and there is absolutely no danger in following the path, why should we then give up the undisputable royal path, free from confusion and harm, and tread the other highly-disputed path of the soul-self identity and the Nirguna Brahman?" (155)

For understanding the Dvaita doctrines, these pages provide a comprehensive yet brief treatment of them in a very simple way.

— K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

*The Fullness of the Void*: By Rohit Mehta. Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi-7. Price: Rs. 60.

This is a brilliant exposition of the Yoga of Theosophy by an experienced practitioner and scholar whose interests are far ranging. What appears to be full for the common man is really empty; what strikes as beyond and vacant is in fact full. To discover this truth is the aim of some lines of Yoga, the theosophical approach being the most recent. Drawing upon H. P. Blavatsky (*Voice of Silence*), Sri Aurobindo, J. Krishnamurti, the texts of Kashmir Saivism and the Upanishads, the author gives a detailed survey of the problems involved and the steps recommended for their effective resolution.

The seeker has to pass through three Halls — Hall of Ignorance, Hall of Knowledge, Hall of Wisdom — before he can enter into the valve of Bliss. The fundamental clue is to perceive and hold the vacant moment between two thoughts, two acts, two breaths and widen that interval. "An interval was left twixt act and act, twixt birth and death, twixt dream and waking dream. A pause that gave new strength to do and to be." (Sri Aurobindo: *Savitri*) The process is seven-tired: *Dana*, Self-giving; *Shila*, character; *Kshanti*, patience; *Viraga*, indifference; *Virya*, dauntless energy; *Dhyana*, meditation; *Prajna*, wisdom-compassion.



In a beautiful passage, Sri Mehta describes what is meditation : "Meditation is not a thinking process. It is a state where all thinking has ceased ; it has not been stopped. When all thinking ceases then the mind is totally silent. In this silence there is no flicker ; the flame of consciousness burns bright and steady .. a state of silence. And it is only in silence that the renewal of energy takes place." (214)

Rohit Mehta touches rare depths in his communication, such as only a Sadhaka can know. This work opens up new dimensions in Yoga.

— M. P. PANDIT

*Bhagavadgita* : An Exegetical Commentary : By Robert N. Minor.  
Heritage Publishers, 4-C Ansari Road, New Delhi. Price : Rs. 150.

Like most modern scholars, especially the Western, Dr. Minor raises the usual questions in his introduction to his work on the *Bhagavadgita*. Is it not highly improbable that a discourse of this profound import, running into seven hundred verses, was delivered on the battlefield just when the hostilities were about to start ? Is the *Gita* an integral part of the *Mahabharata* as it is presented or is it a later interpolation ? Is the *Gita* itself of one piece ? Who was the author ? When was it composed ? The writer quotes the opinions of scores of scholars and commentators but does not himself always pronounce.

Certainly nobody seriously believes that all the seven hundred verses as they stand were spoken on the spot on that fateful day. It is understood that the instruction was given to Arjuna by Lord Krishna at that critical moment in his own way. It was later put in its present form by someone who was open to the inspiration of the Lord. Indian tradition is firm in regarding all the seven hundred verses as one integrated message and we are glad that the writer accepts the "basic unity" of the text.

He feels that the text was added to the epic sometime between 250 B. C. and 250 A. D.

Dr. Minor has certainly made a scholarly analytical study of most of the extant commentaries and works on the *Gita* as made abundantly clear by the profuse quotations and references he makes on every page of his exegesis. It is a pity that he has chosen not to give his translations of the verses along with his commentary. This makes the book of limited use to the general reader. It is only serious research scholars who will find the array of material assembled in these pages useful. As Dr. Norvin Hein says in his Foreword "this is a tool for use in further work."

— M. P. PANDIT



*Classical Saamkhya* : By Gerald J. Larson. Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Delhi - 7. Price : Rs. 60.

This is a revised second edition of the work first published in 1969. The term "Classical Saamkhya" refers to the Saamkhya doctrine as expounded in the "Saamkhya Kaarika" of Isvara Krishna, together with the commentaries thereon. A history of the research work done on the Saamkhya system both by Western and Eastern scholars up to 1979, their findings and a critical evaluation thereof are given in a clear manner. Origin, development and culmination of the Saamkhya theory from Vedic times up to the Kaarika's time are traced out. Author's own interpretation of the Kaarika's is given in a separate chapter. Herein is a new interpretation of the philosophical significance of the Saamkhya with special reference to the classical interpretation of the interaction of Prakriti and Purusha. Shankara's criticism of the Saamkhya thought and a possible rejoinder thereto that might be given by Saamkhyas as imagined by the author in a separate chapter is of absorbing interest. Throughout the text the author does not hesitate to bring to our notice the drawbacks as surmised by him and the problems that remain unsolved up to now. The original text of Saamkhya Kaarika in Roman script together with a nice translation is given in an appendix. Glossary of technical terms, a chronological chart, bibliography and index make the work a highly useful one both to the Western and Eastern students of philosophy and research scholars as well to whom in particular this will serve as a guidance for further studies.

— B. KUTUMBA RAO

*Reason and Revelation* : By Gopi Krishna. Kundalini Publication Trust (Book-Division), New Delhi. Price : Rs. 8.

Though the book is designed to combat the forces of agnosticism and atheism let loose by the modern rationalistic approach of science, the learned author Gopi Krishna whose spiritual experiences lend authenticity to his voice, presents a balanced outlook here. He has something fresh to say to the science-oriented Western world. In the first chapter, "Some thoughts about Religion", he quotes the views of Bertrand Russell and observes that egotism has not always been the dominant factor in religion; that egotism has been the bane of science and philosophy as well. He concludes : "So long as the real nature of the religious impulse is not located, and the law ruling its manifestation and multi-lateral expression in human beings from the dawn of reason to this day, is not discovered, religion will continue to be a controversial riddle for all time to come." In the rest of the book he avers that we still do not know of the relationship



between the mind and neuronic structure of the brain; that the mind is not the last stage in the evolution of man, which is continuous and purposefully creative; that a day will come when a new class of beings able to draw upon the vast oceanic reservoir of psychic energy (Kundalini Sakti) will emerge and people the earth, combining the knowledge and art of the genius with love and intuition of the ecstatic. Mankind will reach the pinnacle of perfection and happiness then. A well-illustrated book of wisdom, it is a welcome addition to our shelf.

— DR. G. SRIRAMAMURTY

*This Life* : By Pranabendu Dasgupta. Translated by M. Ann Dasgupta. Price : Rs. 20.

*The Home-coming* : By Kabirul Islam. Tr. by K. K. Dyson. Price : Rs. 20.

*Murdered Moon* : By Phani Basu. Tr. by U. Bhattacharya. Art and Aesthetics, New Delhi. Price : Rs. 12.

*Behind the Mask* : By Dr. G. K. Saraf. Tr. by M. M. Thakore, P. N. Shastri, Asghar Wajahat and Carlo Coppola. Rupa & Co., Calcutta. Price : Rs. 20.

*The Interior Landscape of the Heart* : Tr. by Parvathy Kanthaswamy, Viji Manickam, V. Manicavasagar, V. Nadanasabapathy and Anand Haridas. Price : Rs. 30.

*An Anthology of Young Belgian Poetry* : Tr. by Various hands. Price : Rs. 60.

*Tea Masters, Teahouses* : By Werner Lambersy. Tr. by Philip Mosley. Price : 35 Belgian Francs.

*Mappings* : By Vikram Seth. Price : Rs. 20.

All the above books, except *Murdered Moon* and *Behind the Mask*, are published by Writers Workshop, Calcutta.

The aesthetic refinement of Pranabendu Dasgupta's poems in *This Life* is efficiently distilled for us in Mary Ann's translations. The music of the original Bengali is lost, but in its place there is an inner lilt :

"The generosity  
of a sunset in the hills . . .  
haven't you learned it?"

Kabirul Islam is also lucky in his translator, Ketaki Kushari Dyson, to present in English his gentle and mystical lyrics in *The Home-coming*. The generous dedication to "all lovers of poetry, art and aesthetics" apart, the *Murdered Moon* of Phani Basu treasures the rich experience gathered from Dr. Basu's vocation of medicine and hobby of painting. Some of the still images in "The Cactus", "The Boatman's Dilemma" and



"De No Vo" deserve particular mention. In G. K. Saraf, we have yet another physician straying into the realms of poetry. Dr. Saraf writes in Hindi but in spite of Prabhakar Machwe's generous certificate of merit, *Behind the Mask* has little that is distinctive to distinguish it from hundreds of such collections.

*The Interior Landscape of the Heart* records the aspirations and anguish of Tamilians living in Malaysia and Singapore. Many of the poems are sharply applicable no less to the India of today. Somachanma's anger, for instance :

"We can cut down a rubber tree  
which doesn't yield latex,  
We can knock down a building  
which is in disrepair,  
We can sell a cow  
which will not calve,  
But what does one do with a man  
who is insincere?"

Twenty-five poems in French of unequal merit written by Belgian youth translated into English are presented in colourful saffron sari by India's Writers Workshop : *An Anthology of Young Belgian Poetry*. The prose poems of Francis Dannemark and Michel Gillas deserve a place in one's shelf of favourites. Philip Mosley's sensitive translation of Werner Lambersy's *Tea Masters*, *Teahouses* carries a fine preface by Pierre Dhainaut.

"In the dogged Western obsession with power, there is only victory or defeat, which in fact resemble each other; aren't they both ridiculous? How to escape power? How to write and live this contradiction without arbitrarily reducing its validity, or without it tearing us apart?"

By waiting for God? Mr. Dhainaut admires Lambersy for conveying the essence of Taoism in a seraphic manner, and we agree with him. The poetic murmur of Lambersy is akin to the whispery *shakuhachi*, the long flute used by Japanese musicians. *Mappings* by Vikram Seth is a medley of original poems as well as translations from various languages including Urdu and German. We wish him well.

— Dr. PREMA NANDAKUMAR

*The Anklet* (Based on "Silappadikaram") : By Kasturi Srinivasan. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Price : Rs. 25.

To confine a great epic as the *Silappadikaram* into three Acts of an English play, no doubt, requires not only imagination but rare courage. The playwright here has made the intense tragedy of the hero of the epic live within a few pages. Faithful as far



as the story is concerned, there is just a slight deviation in Act Two where Madhavi is introduced in the scene along with Kannaki listening to the bad news of the execution of Kovilan for theft of the anklet. It perhaps adds to our better understanding of the character of the courtesan, Madhavi. The white heat of Kannaki's remonstrations at the injustice of her husband's murder by order of the king and the rising crescendo of a battle of arguments between the Ruler of Pandys and her, keep up the tenseness of the entire drama which in English no less moves the reader by its pathos. Skill of dramatisation is evident throughout and the feeling evoked in the reader is one of admiration blended with satisfaction at the art gone into the writing which fills even a tiny bead of poetic expression glow with radiant light of the sun in heavens. Well, the tinkling of the *Anklet* is heard with no less vividness than in the epic.

— K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

*Samarth Ramadas — Life and Mission* : By S. S. Apte. Vora & Co. Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 3, Round Building, Bombay-2. Price: Rs. 15.

Samarth Ramadas was a poet, philosopher, sage, patriot and social reformer. His name is a household word in Maharashtra. The seventeenth century A. D. was a period of great tribulation for India. Hindu society was in distress. Hindu religion was undergoing severe affliction. It was facing almost extinction.

At exactly the same hour when Sri Rama was born long long ago, Ranubai, wife of Suryaji Pant, delivered a male child at Jambu, a village on the banks of the river Godavari in saka year 1530 (1608 A. D.). He was named Narayana. While yet a boy Narayana was worried about the welfare of the country. At the age of 12 his marriage was about to be solemnised. The priest was reciting the Mantras which caution the bridegroom about his future. Narayana tried to understand them. He jumped off the wedding deck. He reached Panchavati on the banks of the river Godavari and practised austerities for about twelve years surrendering himself to Rama. He was popular as Ramadas.

One day some Brahmins of Paithan happened to see Ramadas carrying a bow and arrows. "A Brahmin Sadhu with bow and arrows!" they wondered. They were not, however, prepared to be mere spectators. They were curious to test him and ridicule him, if possible. A bird was then flying in the sky. "Let us see if you can hit it!" they threw a challenge to Ramadas. With one arrow Ramadas brought down the bird. "A Brahmin killing a bird!" the spectators remarked and laughed. They awarded punishment to the accused. Ramadas underwent the sentence. Yet the bird was lifeless! The spectators exhibited



their inability to do anything in the matter. Ramadas implored Sree Rama to bring the dead bird to life. In a minute the dead bird returned to life. The spectators were astonished.

They conferred the title of *Samarth* or 'Competent' on Ramadas. Ever since that event Ramadas was called *Samarth*.

Sivaji, in whom Ramadas recognised every sign and promise necessary to establish his dream of Dharma, became soon his devoted disciple. Ramadas was a great philosopher who preached that a common man also could easily realise the divine.

The author has done commendable service to non-Maharashtra readers by revealing many historical facts relating to the lives of Sivaji and Samarth Ramadas.

— G. V. CHALAPATI RAO

#### SAMSKRIT

*Srimadaandhra Mahabharata Kathaah.* Price: Rs. 20.

*Sanskrita Kaavya Kathaah.* Price: Rs. 21. Both by Garikapati Laxmikanayya, 1-9-327, Vidyanagar, Hyderabad-44.

Hailing from the family of the renowned logician Annambhattu, Sri Laxmikanayya, a retired Telugu professor and scholar in Telugu and Sanskrit, wrote and published more than twenty-five works in Sanskrit, language and won the laurels of many scholars. He is a gifted poet. His command over Sanskrit language and metres therein is commendable. The first book under review, written in Sanskrit prose, contains selected stories from the five Mahakavyas in Sanskrit. Raghu's march for victory, the episode of Kautsa, Indumatisvayamvara are the topics for instances selected from *Raghuvamsa*. The stories are told almost in the words of the poets themselves. The second work is a collection of five stories written in Sanskrit verses. The author has taken the Telugu *Mahabharata* written by the three famous poets Nannaya, Tikkana and Yerrana as his source. Thereby beauties or novel ideas introduced by the three poets in their translations afresh are being brought to some extent to the notice of the Sanskrit readers not acquainted with the Telugu versions. Rajasuya of Dharmaraja, episode of Kausika and Dharmavyadha, Srikrishna Dautya, Dushyantacharita and Pandavas' incognito in Virata's court are the subjects of the five stories herein. Variety of metres and lucidity of the language capture the heart of any reader. These books deserve to be prescribed for high school and college students who opt for Sanskrit.

— "SANDILYA"



- (1) *Sri Kalpa* (Srisukta Kalpa). Price Rs. 5. (2) *Sri Dakshinamurty Kalpa*. Price Rs. 15. (3) *Mahaganapati Kalpa*. Price: Rs. 12. (4) *Sri Hayagriva Kalpa*. Price: Rs. 15. All edited by Sri Potukuchi Sriramamurty. Sadhana Grandhamandali, Tenali.

What Smrities, Grihya and Srauta Sutras are to Vedas, the Tantras and manuals derived thereby are to the Upanishads. Irrespective of our beliefs or disbeliefs, Mantras and Yantras have their proven efficacy. Various divine powers are given different names, and different Mantras are prescribed for propitiating those divinities, based on the experiences of different sages. Unfortunately the literature on Tantras and Mantras, as well as those that are an authority in these branches, are fast disappearing. A Sadhaka is left in lurch. It is in this context that the value of the four publications under review is to be assessed. Sri Potukuchi Sriramamurty, acclaimed as a "Muni", is an authority in this field, an encyclopaedia and a moving library. These four works, written after consulting many available books on the subjects are real gems and practical and authentic guides to the Sadhakas.

Mantra or Mantras, 108 and 1000 names, Yantras, etc., are given in all the four works. *Mudus operandi* of Japa, Puja, Nyasa, etc., also is described. In the first and the third "homa-vidhana" is also given. Texts 2, 3 and 4 contain Kavacha and Panjara also.

*Sri Kalpa* contains the texts of Srisukta and Puruhasukta, and Sayana's Bhashya on Srisukta. Method of chanting of Srisukta combined with the fifteen-lettered Mantra, and Purushasukta in general, and in particular cases with different aims of the devotee is described in detail.

*Mahaganapati Kalpa* is a masterly and comprehensive work on the Upasana of Ganapati and is a complete manual with many details, that is, more Nyasas and Mantras. The famous and highly potential "Sri Vidya Ganesiya Vancha Kalpalata" is a precious inclusion. In addition to these this text contains two separate chapters entitled "Dikshamandara" and Parisishta thereof. Process of worship of "Bala" is also included.

*Sri Dakshinamurty Kalpa*, in addition to the normal features, contains "Vana Durga Panchasati Krama," "Pratyangira Parayana Krama" and "Sri Kalpa" also. Vana Durga and Pratyangira are well-known for their efficacy. The introduction describes with authorities the greatness and significance of the deity. Elucidation of the technical terms — Hridaya, Sirah, Sikha, Kavacha and Astra, etc., that we normally find in "mantranushthana" is an important feature of this part.



*Sri Hayagriva Kalpa* in its introduction, in addition to its relevant normal feature describing the nature of Hayagriva, dilates upon "upasana" in all its varieties, different Dikshas, Kundalini Yoga, Srichakra Nyasas, Rishi and Chandas, etc. "Amnaya-mandara" a separate text giving all Mantras in all the Amnayas with all details is also included in this volume. All these four books easily meet the demands of the Sadhakas, who can read Telugu script, in their respective pursuits.

— "SANDILYA"

*Rasarnava Sudhakara of Simha Bhupala*: Edited by Prof. T. Venkatacharya. Adyar Library and Research Centre, Madras-20. Price: Rs. 110.

Written by Simha Bhupala II, a royal author and patron of letters in the 14th A. D., is an authentic, excellent and exhaustive treatise in Samskrit on dramaturgy and was quoted by famous commentators like Mallinatha. The author not only defines different Rasas, Bhavas, Nayakas, Nayikas, types of dramas, plot and language, etc., but also illustrates his definitions by quoting relevant verses from works written by earlier writers like Kalidasa. He discusses about the merits and demerits of the views expressed by his predecessors in a lucid and unambiguous language.

In his valuable introduction the editor establishes with cogent arguments that Simha Bhupala, but not Visvesvara, is the author of this work. His conclusions, that the name "Recharla" is to be traced to the Samskrit word Rajachala, and that the title "Arigayagovala" is but a Telugu form of the Samskrit word "Arirayagopala" are convincing. Index of the topics dealt with, index of half verses of the Karikas and illustrative and other verses in the text together with a list of books consulted by the author, and different readings found in different manuscripts make this work an ideal critical edition highly useful to all students of Samskrit literature to whom we whole-heartedly commend this book.

— B. K. SASTRY

#### SAMSKRIT—TELUGU

*Kavyamimamsa* by Rajasekhara with a Telugu Commentary "Balaanandi": By Dr. P. Sriramachandra. For copies Srimati P. Subbalaxmi, R-33, O. U. Campus, Hyderabad-7. Price: Rs. 15.

Rajasekhara's *Kavyamimamsa* has its own special place in Alamkarashastra. Saahitya, according to him, is a fifth Vidyaasthaana. Classification of poets, Different kinds of subject matter, Influence of Shastras on Kavyas, Classification of sentences,



Instructions to poets, Plagiarism, Poetic conventions, Geographical divisions of India are some of the interesting topics dealt with and explained with illustrations. In all these discussions, Rajasekhara quotes the views of his predecessors and then he expresses his opinion. The Telugu commentator of this work is not only a scholar in Samskrit grammar, Vedanta and Alamkarasastra, but also a great Samskrit poet. His two Samskrit works, translation of "Gitanjali" into Samskrit and "Susamhata Bharatam" an original drama in Samskrit won awards from the U. P. Government. Herein, he gives Telugu translation of the original text and then, wherever necessary, he gives an elucidative commentary also. Students who are ignorant of Samskrit can understand the text easily and benefit themselves.

— B. K. SASTRY

#### TELUGU

*Sri Ramana Bhashanamulu* (Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi):  
Translated by Ramachandra Kaundinya. Sri Ramanashramam,  
Tiruvannamalai. Price: Rs. 20.

*Talks with Ramana Maharshi* is an English journal (Diary) kept by late M. S. Venkata Ramayya alias Ramananda Saraswati. He was with the Maharshi during the period 1935-'39, when the Ashram was at its height of popularity. A stream of visitors, Indian and foreign, distinguished and undistinguished, poured in day in and day out. The Bhagavan has answered their wide-ranging questions and doubts with a charm all his own. These words of spiritual wisdom would have been lost to the posterity, had not Venkata Ramayya played Boswell to his Master and with remarkable assiduity recorded all the golden words that fell from his lips, putting them in English instantly (for the Maharshi replied in Tamil except in a few cases) and checking them too, with the Maharshi and the visitors for accuracy of translation. The result of this unremitting zeal and effort is the spiritual treasure-trove before us, first published in English (1955) later in a select abridged form (1961) and now again the entire text rendered into chaste, dignified Telugu by the erstwhile Professor of History, Dr. O. Ramachandrayya (Ramachandra Kaundinya) who happened to be a writer of distinction in Telugu too. It makes a delightful reading, although it deals with thorny philosophical and metaphysical problems, without being unfaithful to the spirit of the original. It is a noble translation that deserves to be read again and again for spiritual solace and enlightenment. The 29-page index by Prof. Ramachandrakirti is indeed a boon to laymen as well as scholars.

— Dr. G. SRIRAMAMURTY



*Baalasaahiti Vikaasam* : By Dr. Velaga Venkatappaiah. Siddhartha Publishers, Karl Marx Road, Vijayawada-2. Price : Rs. 60.

The present generation of our children are the future citizens of India. The primary responsibility and duty of the parents is to see that their children are brought up on sound lines and that they are provided with material for their all round development and thereby enable them to blossom into ideal citizens. Viewed in this light, we have to admit that children's literature in our country, particularly in Andhra Pradesh, has not been encouraged and developed properly, though there are a few attempts in recent years.

The author, who is a keen student of Telugu literature, holds a responsible post as a District Officer in the Department of Libraries in the State. By virtue of his official duties, and himself being a devotee of the library movement in Andhra Pradesh, he has the opportunity to observe the books that are brought out year after year to find a place in the libraries. He made a regular study of the books that bestow some thought on the edification of children. This formed the basis for his doctoral thesis and the result is a handy volume (which is the first part) under notice. The book has won for the author the Gopichand Memorial Gold Medal and an Award from the A. P. Sahitya Akademi.

The author has divided the book into ten chapters covering the different types of children's literature — folk songs, stories, lyrics, visual education, journalism, science, etc. The treatment is very analytical and informative. The appendices include list of books useful for further research on children's literature, bibliographies and catalogues, biographical dictionaries, etc., which are very useful, and enhance the value of the book. We commend the book heartily for all those who are interested in children, and their future.

— BHAVARAJU

1. *Visvanatha Sarada* : By Vidyan Tadikonda Venkata Krishnalah, "Vijaya Prabhasa", Tirupati - 7. Price : Rs. 12.
2. *Visvanatha Katha* : By Josyula Suryanarayanamurthy. Divi Seema Sahiti Samiti, Gandhi Kshetram, Avanigadda. (A. P.) Price : Rs. 5.
3. *Visvanatha Sarada, Part I* : Published by Sri Visvanatha Satyanarayana Memorial Committee, Hyderabad. Copies can be had of V. Pavani Sastri, Marutnagar, Vijayawada-4. Price : Rs. 24.

The above three books published in honour of the Telugu literary colossus late Dr. Visvanatha Satyanarayana (abbr. V. S.),



acclaimed by many as the greatest of literary giants of the century, whose *magnum opus* in poetry is *Srimad Ramayana Kalpavriksham* and an equally well-known classic in the field of novel is his *Veyipadagalu*, which have won respectively the Bharatiya Gnana Pith Award of Delhi and the Andhra University's prize for novel quite a time ago. The above three books are intended to throw light on the life and literary personality of V.S.

The first is a collection of seventeen short essays claiming to be a collection of essays portraying the literary genius and personality of Dr. V. S. The chief qualities of the various works of V. S. supported by quotations from V. S.'s own works as well as by thoughts and opinions expressed by famous litterateurs of the times appreciating V. S. and his works. The book ends with an essay entitled 'Ancient Telugu Literature' containing the views of V. S. on some of the ancient poets and their works.

The second one, namely *Visvanatha Katha*, serves as a many-faceted sidelight on the literary and personal qualities of V. S. through many personal reminiscences connecting the author and other literary personalities with V. S., where the author stands by as a well-meaning and critical observer. In a small compass it makes an interesting reading.

The third and last one is a collection of twenty-four essays, the first six of which depicting the multifaceted personality of the great V. S., allude to his literary qualities as well. The next nine essays deal with some particular aspect of V. S.'s *Ramayana Kalpavriksham*. The essays indeed make an in-depth study of the literary value of the portions from the great work. The next three are about the poetry of V. S. in general, shedding light on his poetic style mainly based on *Ramayana Kalpavriksham*. Erudition is discernible in the essay by Sri Vemparala Suryanarayana Sastry on the poetic scholarship par excellence of V. S. Further three essays deal with the literary merits of poetic works of Krishna Theme and two more with Siva Theme. All the essays, especially those relating to V. S.'s poetry, are well-written and make a real contribution worthy of the literary giant. They serve as models for further studies about V. S. The book deserves to be on the shelves of every Telugu library. We hope the second volume proposed to be brought out will see the light of day before long.

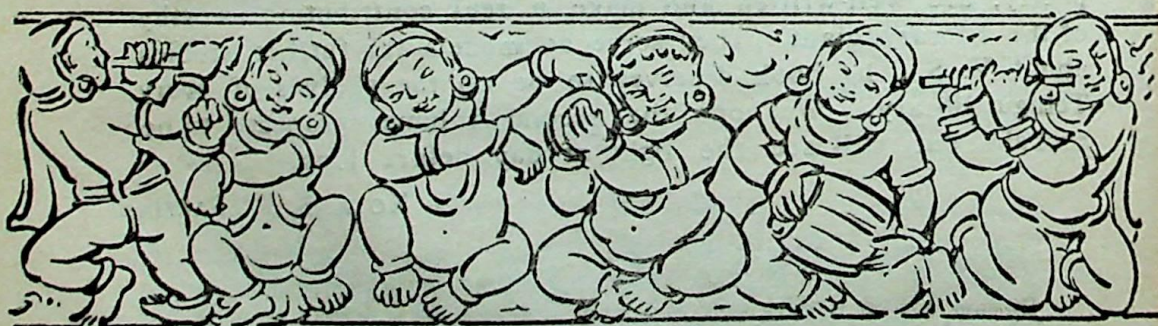
—KOTA S. R. SARMA





## BOOKS RECEIVED

- Sri Ramayana Tarangini* : By P. H. Janakirama Sarma, V. R. College, Nellore. Price: Rs. 12.
- Sri Tripura Rahasya Jnaana Khanda Saaramu* with commentary : By P. H. Janakirama Sarma. Sri Ramanashramam, Tiruvannamalai. Price: Rs. 20.
- Prapancha Jivavinoda Yatra* : By Rani Narasimhachayanulu, Ramanagaram, Vijayawada-3. Price: Rs. 11.
- Tulasimanjari* : By Dr. I. Panduranga Rao. Goda Grandhamala, Musunuru.
- Ramayana Tamisloki* with Telugu translation.
- Sri Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram* with Telugu meanings.
- Both published by Sri Goda Grandhamala, Musunuru.
- Shankara Grandhamala*, 9th Vol. : Sadhana Grandhamandali, Tenali. Price: Rs. 12.
- Sri Sundarakandamu* with Tatparya and special notes in Telugu : By C. V. Seshacharyulu. Sri Jayalaxmi Publications, Hyderabad-500 873. Price: Rs. 40.
- Sloka Ratnarama, Yoga Ratnaramamu* : Vol. II: Both by S. Sriramulu, Nallakunta, Hyderabad.
- Raga Rochi* : By Ramachandra Kaundinya with Samskrit translation by Dr. P. Sriramachandra. Madhavi Book Centre, Sultan Bazar, Hyderabad-27.
- Lalita Trisati Bhaashya* : Telugu translation with Trisati text in Samskrit and an introduction in Telugu : By Dr. P. Subrahmanya Sastry. Price: Rs. 12.
- Subhagodaya Stuti* with Telugu translation : By Dr. P. Subrahmanya Sastry. Price: Rs. 12. Both published by Kuchibhatla Vira Raghava Sastry, Ramalingeswarapeta, Tenali
- Nava Ratnamaala* : Bunch of Vaishnavait Stotras. Price: Rs. 8.
- Sri Ramanuja Sahasranama Stotram* : Price: Rs. 6.
- Suprabhata Gosthi* : Price: Rs. 6. All by Goda Grandhamala, Musunuru, Krishna Dt., A. P.





# TRIVENI

**JOURNAL OF INDIAN RENAISSANCE**

Founded in 1928

Vol. 53 No. 3

October - December 1984

**FELICITATION SPECIAL NUMBER**

**Dr. MASTI VENKATESA IYENGAR**

*Founded by*

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Annual Subscription      Rs. 35-00

Single Copy                Rs. 10-00

**TRIVENI PUBLISHERS Pvt., Ltd.**

**MACHILIPATNAM - 521 001**

**Andhra Pradesh**



## INFORMATION ABOUT 'TRIVENI'

'TRIVENI' is published during April, July, October and January — a new Volume commencing in April, every year. Subscriptions may begin with any Number but no enlistment will be made for periods of less than a year.

### RATES OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

	<i>Surface Mail</i>	<i>Air Mail</i>
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EDITED, PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY BHAVARAJU NARASIMHA RAO  
AT THE TRIVENI PRESS, MACHILIPATNAM - 521 001









**Smt. INDIRA PRIYADARSHINI GANDHI**  
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for 1983,

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the Father of short story in Kannada,

the renowned poet, novelist, playwright and  
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a politician of accomplishment,

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— BHAVARAJU NARASIMHA RAO  
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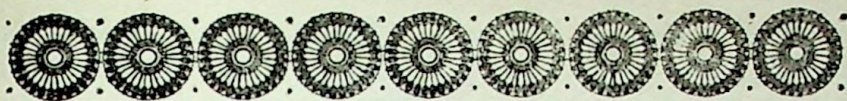
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EDITOR





## THE FELLOW - TRAVELLER

MASTI VENKATESA IYENGAR

( *Rendered by the Author from his poem in Kannada* )

That You have walked with me without intermission throughout the journey, I have not realised till this moment.

Whether it was because I walked as in a sleep unconscious, or my faculties are dense and could not perceive, or, again, Your step is so gentle that I could not notice, or because Illusion lay between us as a veil obstructing vision, I have not to this moment been aware that You have always walked with me.

"Alas", I thought, "I am companionless upon this desert wild," and, turning my grief over in mind, dissolved in deep distress. "I know not the way," I cried, "and there is no one to show it to me." I knew not that You held me by the hand and were guiding me all the way.

I turn back and what do I see? On the sand, with the mark of every step I have made, is the mark of a step of Yours. Over league on league of inhospitable desert, oh Merciful, You have walked with me step by step and I knew it not till this moment.

— Reprinted from *Trivent*, April - June, 1942.



## Masti: The Man and the Man of Letters

Dr. K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

Sixteen years ago, Masti Venkatesa Iyengar ( " Srinivasa" ), then already in his mid-seventies, received the National Sahitya Akademi Award for his latest collection of short stories in Kannada. No question of late recognition, this; his stature as Kannada man of letters was eminent enough for his election to the presidentship of the Annual Sahitya Sammelan at Belgaum as early as 1929, when he was not forty yet. And he presided over the All-India Writers' Conference at Bombay in 1961, and succeeded Dr. S. Radhakrishnan as the President of the P. E. N. All-India Centre, and continues to hold this position. Again ten years ago, Masti was elected to the immortality of Fellowship of Sahitya Akademi, and this set the seal of national apotheosis on one to whom literature had been all along a vocation, a sacerdotaly, a means of self-realisation. Now the conferment of the Vagdevi (Jnanpith) Award reminds us once again how tall indeed Masti is among contemporary India's men of letters. For 70 or more years, Masti has been serving Kannada and Indian literature with sustained distinction, and he has been promoting the cause of culture and enlightenment, and radiating sweetness and light. And it may indeed be said of him that the honours that crowd upon him also attract a measure of unique honour to themselves.

After a brilliant academic career, Masti entered the Mysore Government Service, but in his early 'Fifties retired prematurely of his own accord rather than tamely subject to unjust supercession. The Maharaja, however, conferred upon Masti the title of *Raja-seva-prasakta*. Presently he did yeoman's service, as executive head of the Kannada Sahitya Parishad for two terms, taking the message — the purity and power and glory — of Kannada literature to all sections of the people all over Karnataka. For over 20 years, he edited with dedication and



discrimination the monthly journal, *Jeevana*, which the "university wits" — D. R. Bendre, V. K. Gokak and R. S. Mugali — had founded earlier. The *Jeevana Karyalaya*, however, is active still, and over its imprint Masti's own books are being published.

When Masti started writing, among his contemporaries were B. M. Srikantia (whose birth centenary is being celebrated this year), T. S. Venkannaiya, T. P. Kailasam, C. K. Venkataramiah and D. V. Gundappa. Poetry, drama and fiction flowed from Masti's pen since the early nineteen-twenties, and to some extent set the pace of the Kannada renaissance. Kailasam found Masti's *Savitri* "the sweetest play I know of." Masti's short stories set a standard and inaugurated an age. The greatest of these perhaps, "Masumatti" was translated into English by Navaratna Rama Rao and came out in *Triveni* and a Tamil rendering by Rajaji, with the title "Venuganam" appeared in *Kalaimagal* almost half a century ago. Later, Masti's short stories came out in English in five volumes. *Subbanna*, an exquisite novelette, made Gundappa (and many others) shed copious tears. *Chenna Basava Nayaka* and *Chikka Veera Rajendra* are historical novels, of near-epic proportions. "Apart from ability, one must be a GOOD man to write a book of this kind," said Rajaji about *Chenna Basava Nayaka*; and it is for the latter that Masti has received the Vagdevi Prize. The novels are not just nostalgic exercises in the remembrance of things past; they are really clinical probes into the roots of national decadence, but done with compassionate understanding.

Masti's non-fiction prose writings include *Popular Culture in Karnataka*, *The Poetry of Valmiki*, *Rabindranath Tagore*, a biography of Rajaji, a play on Kalidasa, and a collection, *Essays, Addresses*, etc. Some of these first appeared in Kannada, and later in an English rendering. His autobiographical diversions have a flavour of their own, and tell us a good deal about him as also his contemporaries. Writers young and old have been drawn to him as filings to a magnet, for it is not only as writer and *rasika*, but as man too, Masti is bracing and exhilarating, and his native humanity and inveterate kindness are almost proverbial.

No writer, however "original", spins entirely out of himself, and the scriptures of Masti's inspiration have been, understandably enough, Valmiki and Vyasa and Kalidasa, Shakespeare and Wordsworth and Scott, and Bankim Chandra and Tagore and Tolstoy. If Masti's book-length perceptive study of the Poetry of Valmiki appeared in 1940, his Samskrita



Endowment Lectures on the *Mahabharata* came out much later. The *Mahabharata* is, as it were, an ocean, or all the oceans, and the earth, and the skies too, and a timid person would have refrained from compressing a discussion on the epic into two lectures. But Masti has doubled compression with total comprehension. The structure of the epic, the episodes, the kernel of the story, the characters, the ethics, Dharma-sastra, insinuated by the *Mahabharata* — nothing is omitted. Masti is clear-headed, forthright, lucid, instructive. And yet, as one reads the lectures, one can be a little uneasy too. Masti thinks that there are two or more versions of the same story intertwining throughout, and also other adhesions. There is the pro-Pandava version, the version that defies Krishna, and the version with a Kaurava bias! It is a fascinating game to try to disentangle these from one another, but a dangerous game as well. If you omit the episode of the outrage on Draupadi in the open court, and the Gita on the field of Kurukshetra, many would feel that the *Mahabharata* has been emptied of two of its most essential elements. It is true the *Mahabharata* is huge, and scholars find it unequal in parts, with inconsistencies galore. Shall we try to reconcile the inconsistencies or tidy up the mess by a process of surgical elimination? But Masti on the *Mahabharata* provokes thinking and enhances our understanding of the epic.

As a creative writer, Masti often preferred to quarry in the inexhaustible riches of our classical literature, notably the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The epic characters were to him creatures of flesh and blood, perhaps more real than neighbours and acquaintances in everyday life. In his poem "Ramnavami", a rustic waits on the roadside expecting Rama, Sita and Lakshmana to pass that way. It is Ramnavami, Rama's birthday — what's there so very irrational in the rustic's expectancy? The lie of everyday crass actuality may yet become the Golden Truth of imaginative fiction; yes, indeed, why not?

In one of his notable pieces of fiction, "An Old Story", Masti describes an ascetic who is so conceited about his own purity and *vairagya* that he asks his disciple to alter a verse traditionally attributed to Vyasa: the change is from "*No matter how aged, no matter how great an ascetic, the pleasures of the senses attract a man*" to "*However old, however wise, the pleasures of the senses attract a man. The ascetic alone, they cannot attract.*" How was Vyasa competent to pronounce an opinion on the vulnerability of ascetics? The same night a ravishing woman caught in the rain seeks shelter, and the ascetic allows her to sleep in his hermitage. His equanimity is ruffled however, and late in the night he tries to open her room to steal one more look at



her—but is surprised to see instead the effulgent Vyasa of the matted looks in a stance of silent admonishment of the errant ascetic. It is a story of tremendous power that insinuates Vyasa's utter truth of perception and his infallible insight into the secrets of heaven, earth and hell.

"Masumatti" is a great story by any standard. It is not a question of *bhava* alone, for even the technique—it is cast in the form of an extract from an Englishman's Diary—is superb. How is one to describe the electric quality of Krishna's divine melody as it flowed unpredictably out of his flute? The story is about a dead painter who has left a picture of Gopalakrishna incomplete, having been called suddenly to a fight with the marauders where he had succumbed. It was after countless attempts that had proved fruitless that the painter, after meditation for several days, had come out with a new gift of vision. The trees, and Krishna on one of the branches, with the flute at his lips; a cow, with her rich udders, at some distance; an indistinctly formed figure near the cow. The unfinished picture is already touched with the magic of life—the very leaves seem to listen, the air feels charmed, and all earth is in a trance of attention and adoration. What else? The painter had hoped to show that the calf, on its gallop towards the mother-cow's inviting udders, is arrested on its way, and turns its face towards the tree, and Krishna with his flute. The music has just begun. Being verily the milk of Paradise, Krishna's music makes the calf forget all about the mother-cow and the udders and the milk! "It is only in India", says Raja Rao, "that such a beautiful conception of Art can be conceived."

In "Another, Old Story" Masti brings out subtly yet overwhelmingly the true nature of worship. Parashar's formal "puja" is apparently perfunctory, but then he is so continually absorbed in God that he hardly notices the difference between ghee and blitter neem-oil. In "The Return of Sakuntala", Masti attempts a sequel to Kalidasa's play. It is this teasing thought—what happened when, after her reunion with Dushyanta, Sakuntala returned to Kanva's Ashrama?—that imaginatively shapes itself as a fascinating tale. In an ancillary piece, "Gautami tells a Story", the sage woman relates to Sakuntala, Anasuya and Priyamvada the tale of her own star-crossed love and of her acceptance of fate.

And another, and another. In "The Birth of an Upanishad", Masti reconstructs with a bold sweep how, out of the seasoned observations of a venerable old Sage, his sorrowing disciples built what has since come to be cherished as an immortal Upanishad. In another story, "The Last Days of Sariputra", Masti narrates



how Narasimha Sarma came under the Sakya Muni's spell and became Sariputra, returned to his village in his last days, and met his wife, his daughter and granddaughter; then he went, accompanied by his wife (now a *bikshuni*), to found a colony in Karnataka on the banks of the Godavari. There is something in Masti's nature that makes him feel at home with Rishis and Munis, their Ashramas with their sylvan peace, their old-world atmosphere, their Gautamis and Vedavatis, their elected austerities, their philosophical inquiries, their athletic contests, their storms and calms without and within. Has Masti somehow strayed from that golden past, or is he merely giving it a visible domicile even in our flawed and gnawing present?

I cannot resist the temptation to refer to one more story, the tremblingly beautiful "Sri Ramanuja's Wife." Masti couldn't, perhaps, reconcile himself to the traditional account of Sri Ramanuja's estrangement and life-long separation from his wife. "I saw under a tree near the pond and let my mind wander," he writes, "and as I sat, a story shaped itself in my mind." Late in life, Sri Ramanuja lives incognito in a village in Mysore called Saligrama, and is well looked after by a disciple and his wife. One day a lady comes from the South, along with a companion. Having stolen a glance at Ramanuja in the dusk as he bathes in a pond, this lady finds shelter in the disciple's house. Presently Ramanuja runs high fever, and one night he is vaguely conscious of somebody touching his feet, but when he opens his eyes, the figure quietly withdraws and disappears. Ramanuja gets well in the morning, but the lady from the South takes ill and dies. She is Ramanuja's wife herself, and had come in Ramanuja's trall to atone for her past folly. Having had a first glimpse at the pond, she lingers on to have a closer look. But Ramanuja falls ill, and his condition gets worse. On a night when he is alone and asleep and unattended, she goes to his bedside and prays that her husband's fever may be transferred to her. Like Babar exchanging his life for that of his son, Humayun, here is a concordant too between the human and the Divine! Well, a contract is a contract, and so Ramanuja recovers, and his wife dies. But why is the story so moving? The "lie" of fiction has once again become the higher "Truth" of the imagination. In some other stories too — for example, "Ranganatha of White Hill" and "The Krishna Idol of Penukonda" — Masti scores again and again with the sovereignty of his creative imagination.

Once in a way, Masti ventures into "alien" pastures, as in "The Last Day of a Poet's Life." It is Goethe reviewing — almost re-living — his entire past on the last day of his life, his



mind going back and back to the distant origins. Masti told me recently that he was trying to probe King Lear's past, the years when his daughters — Goneril, Regan, Cordelia — made the passage from childhood and girlhood to early womanhood. For Masti, nothing human, nothing that pertains to the imaginative world, is "alien" in the least! And of course there are the many stories that probe the "present" — the contemporary social reality — and there is infallible precision and compassion in his reports charged with poetry and humour alike. "The Curds-Seller" is perfect in its kind, and the Rangappa stories are endlessly enjoyable. Generally speaking, Masti's stories hover about the delectable realm between fact and fancy, smiles and tears. Here and Eternity. Hence the sudden cloud bursts and the rain, the iridescences, and the arc of marriage between the little egos and the Grace Abounding.

We have in Masti, then, a writer of fiction who, not only responds to the laughs and heart-aches of contemporary life, but also exchanges pulses with creative powers like Kalidasa, Shakespeare and Goethe, and with princes and prelates of spiritual empires like Valmiki, Vyasa, Vamadeva, Sakya Muni, Ramanuja. It is because Masti is endowed with this kind of aesthetic sensibility, this positive capability to sense the past and the present alike, this supreme gift of identification with diverse ages, situations and characters, it is this combination of qualities that makes him a creative writer *sui generis*. And his criticism illuminates more than explicates, and when one is with him and listens to him, one forgets the distinction between Kavi and Rasika; one is only aware of the Masti ambience:

O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,  
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

( Note : My earlier and shorter "Tribute" appeared in  
*The Hindu* of 7 April 1974. )





## MASTI — AS I KNOW HIM

Dr. D. JAVARE GOWDA

*Former Vice-Chancellor, Mysore University*

Masti Venkatesa Iyengar whose *nom de plume* is "Srinivasa" has carved a niche for himself in the hearts of the Kannada people, through his ever-shining literary gems which reflect the continuously evolving cultural traditions of Karnataka and India. He was one of the very few literary titans who were revered and adored very affectionately throughout the breadth and length of Karnataka by one and all, during my college days. He was known widely by then as the Master genius in the art of short story writing which had earned rightly for him the title of the "Father of short story" in Kannada. His penetrating and graceful plays and narrative poems were a feast to the readers. The younger writers tried to imitate his chaste and elegant style and artistry, while his admirers thronged in an assembly or function in which he participated, only to have a glimpse of him or to talk to him. People who went to his house to have his Darshan and to pay their respects, returned with a sense of satisfaction and exhilaration that the person whom they met, was not an egoistic awful stranger, but was an affectionate and amiable person belonging to their own kith and kin.

It was during the year 1948 that I met Masti for the first time in his house. I had read all his works by then. I liked his homely style. I had heard his speeches more than once. I liked them not for their oratory in the Greek sense, but for the flow of simple language which aimed at the harmonious blending of grand thought into inartificial, delightful idioms and phrases. I had developed flawless love and reverence towards his personality as expressed through his writings and speeches. I was longing to meet and talk to him. An opportunity presented itself to me when I was asked by the editor of a monthly journal to contribute an article on Masti and his works. I wrote to



him seeking for an interview. Pat came the warm reply that I could meet him in his house on a particular morning.

Masti, with his caste mark on his forehead, looked to me to be highly orthodox. I had, of course, formed an idea of his life and personality by reading his books. I had come to the conclusion that he must be a kind-hearted, simple, straightforward, cultured gentleman. "Could he not be a man of double personality, as some writers are, who perform exactly the opposite of what they profess through their writings?" I thought for a moment. I was really nervous to meet him. I was thinking as to how I should behave if my expectations became untrue.

At the appointed time, I crept into the compound of his bungalow, and tapped the door softly. In another moment, Masti himself appeared with a smiling face and gentle voice greeting me with the words, "Please come in. How nice to see you! Are we meeting for the first time? Yes." I was looking into his beaming face and glistening eyes. He opened the door, took me by the right hand, led me to the hall, asking me at the same time in a very familiar and affectionate tone, "How are you? How is your wife? How many children have you? Which is your native place?" By that time, my nervousness had disappeared completely. I felt as though I was one of his family people. My inward spirit bowed to him without any outward gestures.

"I have reserved these morning hours for you. We can talk leisurely. I have not yet taken my breakfast. I was waiting for you" he said. I nodded my assent. In a few minutes, *dosas* were served: one, two, three. "You are quite young. Don't feel shy. You must eat more. I like people who eat well. Eat one more *dosa* for my sake. I will serve." These sweet words of Masti are still ringing in my ears and the flavour of *dosas* is watering my mouth. Two hours of my stay and talk with him impressed me so much that I felt convinced that the Masti of real life is not different from the Masti as revealed through his works.

A glance at the Bio-data of Masti will convince any on-looker that the destiny was shaping his career from his childhood to a purposeful goal which inspired him to play an active role in the cultural resurrection of this land. He always stood first in the examinations, including the Mysore Civil Service Examination. He became aware of his literary talents very early in life and spare no pains in bending all his energies, both spiritual and intellectual, towards reaching the pinnacle of success. It was his



devotion to duty, sincerity of purpose and disciplined life that were responsible for his spectacular success both as an administrator and a man of letters. Even in the literary field, he has the rare distinction of being an all-rounder like "Kuvempu", who has not left any literary genre untouched with phenomenal success.

It is a matter of pride that some of his plays, many of his short stories, his narrative poems, his novels and several critical works are a significant contribution not only to Indian literature, but to world literature also. His *Sri Rama Pattabhishekam* is a monumental contribution to the long tradition of Ramayana literature. In the same way as his life style is inimitable, so also is his literary style, both being complementary to each other.

He never misused his official position for selfish gains or extraneous unlawful purposes. He knew that it was meant to earn his livelihood in accordance with the fixed norms and code of conduct. He compares official power with the snake-basket of a snake-charmer. After the public performance is over, he covers the basket carefully and keeps it in a safe corner of his shed. He does not keep it by his bedside while sleeping. Masti says that one should forget that he is so and so, as is the case with the snake-charmer, after his official duty is over and he should keep himself away from it. Masti did really practise this precept very meticulously. But he would never allow himself to be cowed down by higher authorities or his self-respect to be bartered away for any heavy price. When he was superseded by his junior while he was in Government service, he opted out for premature retirement, only to devote himself completely for literary pursuits.

Faith in the Supreme and adherence to morality are the two fundamental characteristics of his personality. He believes in the sublimation of wrong into right, ugliness into beauty and evil into good. He never deviates from the path of truth and righteousness. Inexcitability, tolerance and gentility are the inherent qualities of his behaviour. Success or failure, he remains unruffled. He is courteous to all, even to his opponents. He never stoops to vulgarity. He is soft even towards the villains he has depicted in his literary works. He is neither a cynic nor a pessimist. It is these virtues that have sustained him during the long course of his life's journey and made him feel that life is worth living. It is the personality of this calibre that pervades the entire arena of his literature.

Envy and hatred are foreign to him. He feels extremely happy when a fellow-writer produces works of excellence and



gets awards. He derives pleasure from such an award as though he is himself the recipient. When a youngster gets an award in preference to himself, he is so generous as to say that sweetmeats should be distributed first among children while old people should be delighted to see them revelling joyously.

He is gentle to the core. He never uses harsh words either in his talk or writing. He does not ridicule even a wayfarer. He expresses even his displeasure and anger in a mild way. He does not lose his temper even when provoked. He believes in the old wise saying that truth, when it is not pleasing, and untruth, though it is pleasing, should not be uttered. This is the motto of his life too. This principle which he cherishes very carefully, finds its way into his literary works also. Condemnation, disparagement, sarcasm, vituperation and hard words rarely occur in his critical works. He is never vehement even in his disapproval of substandard works. At the utmost, he may administer mild dose of pills soaked in honey. He is charitable even to his critics. When a collection of his poems was published, a reviewer criticised him severely, alleging unjustifiably that he was very poor in diction. Masti reacted in his own inimitable style, "O, my younger brother, what you say about my poetry is true. I started writing in Kannada, you know, even before I learnt it properly." He did not utter these words out of cowardice or malice. Only a man of courage and conscience can assert himself in this way. There is a bit of restrained sarcasm also lurking in these words. "If my well-wishers, specially men of good literary taste," he continues, "could find my works palatable to them, I feel highly favoured; if they are not worthy of their appreciation, I comfort myself by resigning to my fate that God has given me only so much as I am entitled to." This is the characteristic of a *Sthitaprajna* as described in the *Gita*.

He has helped in many ways, the modern renaissance movement take its roots and shape. During the early phase of the modern period he used to move about in search of talented people, and if he discovered anybody, he would sit with them, read their compositions, pat them on the back, encourage them to continue the cultivation of literary habits, write introductions and even undertake to publish their works at his own expense, without expecting any return. Some of the beneficiaries of his generosity had the good fortune of shining as luminaries in the great galaxy of literary colosses. He is still helping the writers who are in indigent circumstances, financially. He shuns publicity about what he is doing.



By, editing "Jeevana", a monthly for a long period, he showed to the world that the position of an editor was so sacred that he should not yield to demoralising pressures and temptations. Apart from being a model for magazines of the kind, *Jeevana* was read mainly for its editorial comments in local, national and international events. When there was a controversy about the admission or non-admission of Hindu ladies raped by communal fanatics to the Hindu fold, he writes that they should be taken back in the same way as a child, discharged from the isolation hospital where he was admitted for treatment of a deadly disease, is welcomed to the family reunion. He reacts painfully to the post-independent bickerings and quarrels among the Indian leaders and draws their attention to the conduct of the British people, specially during the period of national catastrophe, pointing out their political wisdom administrative efficiency, patriotic fervour and restrained behaviour and to the fact how Churchill agreed to form the national government during the war period and how he stepped down coolly from the highest seat of prime-ministership when he was not wanted by the people. Writing about the various schools in the literary field, he says very correctly that there is nothing wrong if some people were to assert that they wanted literature which would cater to their taste and that there would be no end if they were to propose that any other literature which was not to their liking, should be allowed to perish. He cites an interesting illustration in defence of his argument. An old man had two wives. The senior wife's hair had turned grey. She pulled out all the black hairs of her husband so that he should not look younger than herself, while the junior wife pulled out all his white hairs so that he should not look old, with the result the head of the poor old man became completely bald. Masti admonishes the critics that the same fate might befall the literary field if they continued to indulge in such a kind of perilous propaganda.

This is Masti whose intellectual vigour and spiritual vitality have not faded in spite of his old age. He is the same Masti as one used to see forty years ago. He is entitled to any honour that the world could bestow on him and he is also too great for any award. Like any other great literary genius of his calibre, he belongs to all climes and times and not to any group, country or to any particular time.





## Two Poems of Bharati

### May India Prosper

May India prosper!  
May India prosper!

All the thirty crores of us  
follow the path of socialism.

Will one hereafter cheat another  
by taking away his food cunningly?

Will one hereafter watch another  
in suffering and pain indifferently?

Our country is full of vast fertile lands,  
fruits and vegetables  
she gives us in abundance.

Let us proclaim an order  
and uphold it for ever;  
if an individual goes without food  
let us destroy the world.

Lord Krishna said:  
"I live in all beings.  
We all belong to one and the same community,  
We are all Indians,  
We are all equal,  
We are all kings of this land,  
We are all kings of this land."  
May India prosper. May India prosper!

### Prayer to Goddess

What I think  
should be carried out,  
I should think only good thoughts,  
I should be full of courage,  
I should have unclouded wisdom,  
like fog before the sun  
let all my sins be washed away.

— Translated from Tamil by R. Sundaresan



## Masti: His Writings In English

K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

A Kannada writer of vast creative talents could hardly be expected to contribute in another language like English so much to his lasting credit as Masti. While like Tagore he has attempted with success every variety of literary form such as poem, novel, play, short story, essay, criticism, biography, sketch, dialogue, he has, though not in equal quantity and variety but in no less distinct quality, given us quite a good number of critical essays, biographical sketches and stories in English.

Masti cannot claim to be a stylist in that language but preserves a naturalness of expression which surpasses any of the usual characteristics associated with prose-writing. People who have watched him in conversation may easily discern the same unaffected, gentle and refreshing stamp in his writing. With no occasion to strain for effect, his language runs like a rill which makes little noise of its existence. His prose too does not run to lengthy or involved sentences nor into deliberate short ones after a staccato manner. In whatever way it can be described, it reflects vividly his personality: mild, selective, individualistic and unassuming. At any rate to those who are familiar with his manner and method, no difference at all they convey from his speech or conversation. This identity makes for his being recognised as a writer of uncommon simplicity. Idiomatic of usage and with no penchant towards any known model in English, he maintains an originality that is the man himself.

Turning to his English books, almost the earliest one to see the light of day was "The Popular Culture of Karnataka." Lectures no doubt they were to university students, still devoid of bookish scholarship, they retain something of the history of the people inhabiting a region of the land, whose culture has a permeating influence on song and story and whose religious



background accounts for the peasantry being fully conscious of their early traditions of living and growing.

About 1941, his "Poetry of Valmiki" appeared to convince readers and students of the great epic, that to understand its beauties one should have lost himself in its poetry as Masti. In sixteen chapters of close analysis of the "Chief Characters," "The Civilization and Culture," "The Valuation of Valmiki," etc., the book abounds in some of the subtlest evaluations of a poet's unequalled ability of narration of the life of a most exemplary man. For sheer enjoyment of Masti's powers as a narrator in lucid, unsophisticated prose, the volume stands as yet unsurpassed. He made once again Valmiki live in our hearts.

His four volumes of short stories came next which practically fixed Masti in the remembrance of literary students of this particular genre of writing. Experienced short story writers in both Tamil and English estimated them as unforgettable for their special quality of gaining on our hearts with a slow but sure emphasis of their art. Some of the stories as "The Curds-seller," "The Teacher" and "Venkatasami's Love" can find rarely their equal in literature. Connoisseurs such as Rajaji volunteered to turn the last two stories mentioned into English. As a matter of fact, Navaratna Rama Rao's English translation of "*Masumatti*" in *Triveni* quarterly induced Rajaji to translate from the English rendering into Tamil, and offer it to the *Kalaimagal* monthly. The art of writing with no trace of artificiality made Masti superior of his individuality and imagination. Howevermuch Masti's name has become a household one in Karnataka, for litterateurs in other languages, to know of his creativity, the English renderings form certainly the main sources.

"Rabindranath Tagore" was the next publication of his to appear in print and arrest the attention of writers. Masti showed how far a great poet to be understood, despite language barrier, an adoring student of the poet's writings in translation can justify by ample evidence of his insight into the poetic thought. Some of the selections from Tagore which he has collected in that volume easily tell us how much himself of an authentic poet Masti is to have peered into the realms of a mystic soul like Tagore.

In 1958, "Chenna Basava Nayaka" in English translation by Navaratna Rama Rao became the first historical novel of Masti's, painting the background of the times of Muslim rule in Mysore and invoking the justice that was due to the memory of the ruler, Hyder Ali. The book made people realise that



after the novelette "*Subbanna*" which came earlier can be well considered to have exceeded it in powers of delineation of human nature. In places, Masti seems like Valmiki a mere scribe of what he had seen to have taken place actually before his eyes. Epic colour envelops the story, and sometimes the Maharani Santavva reminds us more of Kausalya in Valmiki.

"Chikka Veera Rajendra" no doubt is more striking by its tragedy, and the material woven into historical details makes it more of a permanent achievement for a novelist of Masti's calibre.

By the time Rajaji retired from official position of the Governor-General of India, Masti had started dwelling on his adorable human qualities aided with acuteness of intellect and goodness of heart, drawing him to portray him exactly as he found him. In many places in the two volumes, which appeared much later, one can trace without doubt the intimacy which Masti had felt for his hero and the admiration for the man in teaching every individual of any intellectual worth that came into contact much to learn from his conduct both in private and public life. Perhaps, as Rajaji observed at another context concerning one of Masti's creations, it may not be necessary when making a long book that everything done or said must be put in writing. The selection of material to pinpoint a trait or tendency would be sufficient. According to modern biographers in the wake of Lytton Strachey, few samples of both excellence and blemish in the character of an individual written about could make the reader feel less of fatigue and remember easily the whole of the picture portrayed in light and shade. Because Masti did not choose any other for his model, he did what he felt due to make his Rajaji live in the pages of his book. Without dramatic condensation too, the story of Rajaji fares no less in its ultimate whole to those wedded to recollections too dear to omit.

Coming to his "Essays and Addresses" contained in a separate volume published almost at the same time as the two volumes on Rajaji, they are of immense value to most of the modern writers who get into a feeling that nothing will be sensational or of immediate consumption by the reading world, unless both the manner of telling as well as the substance contained would satisfy the curiosity and eagerness for change in the readers. Eighteen chapters contained therein provide different aspects of Masti's profound interest in all life. "The thought was all based on the idea about national welfare which came to me as a growing boy and young man from contact with great elders, and has



regulated my outlook through the years," is the plea made in the introduction to this volume. Conscious, as he says, of English not being his language, and hence the possibility for errors creeping in any such writing attempted, he is not on that score guilty of grave slips or ill-constructions of any kind requiring improvement. The addresses, some of them, especially delivered to writers make deep impression by their sincerity for improving their standards. One very important emphasis of his on writers is salutary in every sense. He has asked writers never to imagine that without good living and noble thinking one could achieve the objective of endurability in the long run. Talents for creativity and skill in writing are entrusted to the writer by a Higher Power and the remembrance of it should save him from falling a prey to coveting the latest attitudes of Western writers. In between some of the abstract thoughts, there are delightful short sketches of eminent men in public life such as Sir M. Visveswarayya, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Tagore and Ram Mohan Roy. They show how much power of observation Masti possesses in delineating their character and mind. One piece particularly: "Tagore: A Personal Impression" is a vivid picture of Tagore drawn with utmost sensitivity and felicity. Perhaps none other of Tagore's admirers here has so unforgettably portrayed Tagore's figure and personality in lines of consummate art. Delivering a lecture on "A Cultural Programme for New India," he has shown what an amount of worthy material is in our country for drawing upon and how his faith in the future of our countrymen is never allowing of despair. One essential aspect of our growth depends, according to him, on remembering that "our culture touches the whole of our life and if we wish to make the programme for improving in culture we have to take a look at all our life." Nothing could be more timely and salutary to our countrymen, trying to imitate most of Americanism in fashion of dressing and talk.

A true writer's credentials show out in private and public when he retains an unsophisticated philosophy of outlook. Masti's two tiny companion volumes published recently under the titles: "Thoughts on My Life" and "Thoughts on Religion" sum up his testament of faith in both man and religion. Notes penned from day to day in somewhat of a diary of his thoughts on life, breathe an abiding odour of the pent-up feelings and emotional upsurges which he had undergone and which seek an outlet in calm assessments of his own reactions to society and life. He says that supported by the feeling that God has been present with him, he has clung to a little realisation of his own self as his sole resource in life. How soothing to imagine of a writer of vast experience expressing such sentiment



at a time when most others will be tottering on their legs and groping their way in the darkness of their souls!

Masti's ambition, if he has ever felt or wished others to know, would be to feel contentment always and to spread the same sense of uninterrupted healthy outlook around him in domestic as well as company of friends. To hold the pen to the last is the *Dharma* of a writer. Tagore wrote till his last and Masti even while past ninety, holds firm the pen to explore still the regions of healthy imagination.

### Emergency Exit

How imprudent to die  
depersonalized  
without hanging up the receiver  
on a faith gone dead

What impudence to wish  
to deify  
the holy image of love  
as conceived in one's youth

How important to keep turning  
a false face  
to the revival tent  
where one shuts in one's disgust

What shamelessness unveiling  
Solstitally  
the tilt of the astrolable  
to the sailors of crazy seas

But impossible forestalling  
upon the stroke of "if"  
life from repeating the pattern  
of stumbling along toward an impasse  
the way an illusion fades.

—Translated from Greek by Agnes Sotiracopoulou-Skina and Ann Rivers



## A Journey with Sri Masti

Mr. Justice NITTOOR SRINIVASA RAU

*Chief Justice of Mysore (Retired)*

The first occasion for me to meet Sri Masti Venkatesa Iyengar occurred when I was a student of the Central College, Bangalore, a little more than 60 years ago. By that time I had known about him and read his writings. He had already emerged as a major figure in the firmament of Kannada renaissance. I was, therefore, naturally looking forward eagerly to the opportunity of meeting him. At that time he was the Sub-Division Officer, Madhugiri, and visited Bangalore to attend the Central College Day Celebrations of that year. At our request he stayed in the Central College Hostel with an intimate friend of mine, the late Sri N. S. Shankariah. We availed ourselves of the opportunity of spending all the time we could manage with him. From the first moment we felt totally at home with him. The subsequent years brought me closer to him and all through this time he has treated me as a member of his family and I have been the recipient of the affection of Sri Masti and his gracious wife, the late Smt. Pankajamma.

During this long period, I have had many opportunities of travelling and spending time with him in journeys and visits outside Bangalore. One may have known a person for many years and met him often and still not got into close touch with him personally. But it is a matter of experience that when one spends even a few days with another in an outing when the two are together all the time, they come to know each other far more closely. I have gained immeasurably by such opportunities I have had of travelling with Sri Masti. His broad outlook, compassion, considerateness to others in regard to the minutest detail, delicate sense of unbarbed humour and his pure heart are characteristics that distinguish him. My association with such a personality has been one of the great blessings of my



life. In this article I shall briefly narrate my experience in one of the outings.

Sri Masti was invited by the University of Madras to deliver an extension lecture on Karnataka Folk Culture. He accepted the invitation and the lecture was to take place in the winter of 1927. He extended a most affectionate invitation to me to accompany him. The journey was to be made in his car. His father-in-law, Sri A. Krishnaswami Iyengar, and his Sambandhi, Pandit Cheluva Iyengar, were to be the other members of the party. How could I miss such a glorious opportunity? But there were one or two matters to be considered. I had just recovered from a spell of illness and was convalescing. Would it be wise to undertake a long journey? I had at that time appeared for the examination in Procedures which one had to pass before enrolment as an Advocate of the then Chief Court of Mysore. That examination was to take place in a couple of weeks and I had not been able to prepare for it on account of my illness. How could I afford to spend even a few days in an outing without impairing my chances in the examination? Sri Masti had ready answers for both the problems. He said that the climate in Madras was at its best in winter and it was ideally suited for recuperation of health and that I would be a gainer by the journey. As regards the Procedures examination, Sri Krishnaswamy Iyengar had been a Magistrate for many years and that he himself had functioned in that capacity. So, during our journey and stay in Madras they could coach me up in Criminal Procedure. Was this not much better than reading books on the subject? I need hardly say that these assurances dissolved my hesitation and we embarked on the journey.

The first place of our halt was Kolar, where we stayed under the hospitable roof of Sri T. Srinivasachar, a leader of the Bar and a greatly respected public figure. When we continued our journey from there, our host equipped us with quantities of delicacies for munching on the road. I should add that on our return journey we enjoyed at Kolar the hospitality of another leading Advocate, Sri T. S. Venkatachar of Kolar who had been a classmate of Sri Masti. At Madras we stayed at Mohan Vilas, where a hostel was run by the Indian Officers' Association for the benefit of students hailing from the families of the members of the Association. I had stayed in that hostel during the years of my study in the Law College of Madras. Some of my friends were continuing to stay there. It was comfortable and homely. Sri Masti's stay there was a great occasion not only for my friends from Bangalore but for the other students also.



The Extension Lecture was delivered on two successive dates in the Senate House of the Madras University located on the Marina Beach. One would have thought that a lecture by a noted literary figure like Sri Masti Venkatesa Iyengar would attract a sizable, if not a large, audience and that many Kannadigas would avail themselves of the opportunity. But the attendance was thin. We, the Bangalore contingent itself, formed a good proportion of the audience. But this was more than made up for by the quality of the audience which included Sri Panje Mangesh Rao and Sri Benegal Rama Rau and by the gracious presence of the Vice-Chancellor, Sri Venkatarangam Naidu who, though in poor health at the time, made it a point to attend the lecture. He personally welcomed Sri Masti on his arrival at the Senate House, presided over the meeting and delivered heart-warming speeches at the commencement and at the end of the lecture. We also had the privilege of visiting him at his residence where we were received most warmly. During the period of our stay in Madras, both Sri Benegal Rama Rau and Sri Panje Mangesh Rao made it a point to spend much time with us and I remember the glorious moonlight night with Sri Panje Mangesh Rao on the sands of the beach when he and Sri Masti regaled us with delightful conversation till beyond midnight.

In the course of our itinerary we went to Kanchipuram and visited the principal temples there. We also visited the temple at Sriperumbudur, the birthplace of the great Vaishnava Saint, Sri Ramanuja. After the *mangalarati* to the deity in the temple, the Archak gave us the Prasadam which, of course, was in the form of Pongal and Pullodare. After eating the Prasadam I was trying to find out where I could wash my hands. This must have been noticed by Sri Masti, for he came to me and whispered in my ear, "Have you not heard the saying about Sri Vaishnava temples : "Rangane Perumal Pongale, Prasadam Kambame Tanni ?" (Which means : After taking Prasadam of Rangaswami no water is needed for cleaning the hands — the temple pillars are to be used.) I accordingly solved the problem of cleaning my hands in terms of the last part of the adage. One could see from the appearance of the pillars that this prescription must have been followed by generations of devotees.

On our return journey, we visited Mahabalipuram and Pakshi Teertha. Though the car driver Mariappa was with us, it was Sri Masti who was mostly at the steering wheel. He obviously enjoyed being at the wheel. The outing lasted altogether about a week.



I can never forget this episode in my life, for apart from Sri Masti himself the company of others was also most rewarding. Sri Krishnaswamy Iyengar was always a picture of calm and dignity and though not given to speaking more than the occasion called for, one felt the benignity of his presence. Pandit Cheluva Iyengar's participation in the conversation was always instructive and interesting and enlightened by gentle humour.

Before I close, let me say that Sri Masti's prophecy on both my problems was amply fulfilled. I returned to Bangalore refreshed and rejuvenated in body and mind. The elders of magisterial knowledge and experience and I, their prospective pupil, forgot during the whole period that I was to be coached by them in the law of Criminal Procedure. I took the examination, if for no other reason at least because I had paid the prescribed fee. It was the practice when publishing the results of the examination, not only to indicate the class in which the candidate had passed, i. e., 1st, 2nd or 3rd, but to indicate the rankings in all the classes. When the results of that examination were declared, it was found that no candidate had failed. My name and that of a good friend of mine were bracketed at the bottom of the list of those who came out in third class. My guess is that the examiners of the Board must have been the most considerate and sympathetic of men and must have felt that, instead of making it necessary for us to embark on a second effort, we could together be pushed above the bottom line and this must have resulted in our unusual distinction.

## Heart as the Sun

SUBHAS CHANDRA SAHA

The sun in the afternoon,  
the bright radiant disc,  
possesses warm light of his own,  
fresh and profuse.

The heart inside its cage —  
the incandescent, invigorating halo  
frightens the dark about  
and paces in its own flush,  
fearless and mellow.



## Masti's Contribution to Kannada Literature

Dr. R. S. MUGALI

Sri Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, popularly known as Masti, is a doyen of modern Kannada literature who stands out as a colossus spanning as a bridge between the old and the new in his own characteristic manner. He is the most elderly Kannada writer, who has completed 93 years of fruitful life, has continued to be in good health and cheer and kept up writing with the same zest as before.

In his life and personality one can see a singular combination of an abiding faith in the Divine and the eternal values of Indian culture, constantly being examined and assessed by the light of reason and free thought. He is thus an ancient among the moderns and a modern among the ancients. His own synthesis of the religious and the rational attitude to life has found expression in his writings. There is no form of modern literature which he has touched and has not adorned with his seemingly simple and significant approach and style. He has written poetry—lyrical, devotional and narrative—short story and novel, plays in prose and verse, criticism, biography including autobiography in a manner, different from the usual and comments on contemporary life and events as the editor of a monthly literary journal. It is as a great story-teller, however, that he shines most in the galaxy of letters and will continue to occupy the highest place in short story and fiction not only in Kannada literature but also in Indian literature when he is put across properly in the other Indian languages and read all over India.

### Short Story

Sri Masti is rightly considered to be the father of the modern short story in Kannada, though he is not exactly the pioneer in this field. He started writing short stories as early as 1910 and published his first collection in 1920. Since then,



the number of stories written by him in prose has been nearly one hundred, published in 15 collections so far. He is a born story-teller, taking delight in enlivening incidents and characters known to him with an effortless ease and without much of an embellishment or glaring technique. Among his very first stories we find a lively sense of humour in the picture of a young man in a middle-class family trying to be modern in his courtship and marriage much to the embarrassment of his life partner, who has been brought up in the traditional manner. The stories entitled "Rangappa's Courtship" and "Rangappa's Marriage" as also "Rangappa's Deepavali" are good examples of this kind of gentle, satirical humour. Gradually Masti spread his net far and wide and chose themes and characters from the vast panorama of life, encompassing the rich and the poor besides the middle-class, the old and the new, Indian and foreign. The main source of his inspiration is his genuine interest in human life and character in the noble values of life, chiefly as enshrined in Indian tradition and culture and in the greatness of virtue, that overcomes weakness after a period of severe trial and suffering. His narration and his diction are deeply influenced by his wide contact with the life of the common people and his close acquaintance with Indian folklore, mainly of the Kannada land. One of the short stories that deserves a special mention from among his earlier collections is "Ondu Haleya Kathe" (An old tale), which is as new as it is old, dealing with the eternal theme of man's weakness for woman's charms which overpowers his pride of self-mastery. The story in brief is this. A charming woman asks for shelter in the hermitage of a recluse, being caught in a thunder storm at night. She is taken in and shown a room, which she bolts from inside. Taken in however by her charms, the recluse asks her to open the door so that he can see her only once. She refuses on the plea that she can open to no one except her husband. Caught in the inner storm of temptation, he breaks open the door, only to face sage Vyasa in the place of the woman—Vyasa whose words that a woman's charm can tempt an old man, a scholar or a recluse were resented by him just before this incident. The subtle art of the author in the narration of the episode and the delineation of the conflict of character elicits our high admiration.

Another story of equal merit in the earlier bunch of stories is "Indireyo Allavo" (Is it Indira or an illusion), a domestic theme that rises to tragic height and reaches the climax as a perfect short story by its surprising finish. A gentleman returns home tired by the day's work in the office and is lying in an easy chair, when his beloved wife Indira appears before him,



showers all her affection on him and makes him forget all his worries. She disappears all of a sudden, leaving him to a dull and drab life in the none-too-happy company of his second wife who replaced Indira, who is no more. The contrast between his life before and after his second marriage has been brought out in this story through an art that conceals art. As we proceed to the later collections, we are astounded by the variety of theme, chosen by the author from the regional, national and international storehouse of folklore, legend and history. For instance, we come across a story like "Kalmaadiya Kona" (The buffalo of Kalmaadi), in which the age-old superstition of butchering an animal to please a village deity has been held up to ridicule and exposed to irony, a truly regional theme. We have then a story called "Acharyara Patni" a theme, concerning the wife of Ramanujacharya of national importance. The story called "Kaviyal Bala Koneya Dina" (The last day in the life of a poet) deals with the last day in the life of Goethe, the great German poet, raising the thematic choice and narration to the international plane. In fact, one whole collection of short stories is mostly devoted to foreign themes such as "Alexander's Gurudakshina", "The defeat of Napoleon", "The last Kapet and Master William". Masti is perhaps the first Indian author, who has gathered a variety of story material from foreign sources from both East and West and handled it with commendable ease and confidence. Two stories, viz, "Hemakutadinda Hintirugida Mele" (After return from Hemakuta) and "Goutami Heluda Kathe" (The story told by Goutami) stand apart from the rest as they reveal a rare power of meaningful inventiveness, being inspired by Kalidasa's drama "Abhijnana Sakuntalam".

On the whole, the short story as tackled by Masti is characterised by diversity of situation and character and wisdom though at times it is too simple and falls flat without much of a thrill anywhere.

### Fiction

Masti has so far written 3 or 4 novels, certainly a small number compared to the vast number of short stories penned by him. But his contribution to the world of Kannada fiction is distinctly qualitative. His earliest novel or novellette entitled "Subbanna" is remarkable for its simplicity and maturity in the complete delineation of the growth of a character to its fullest extent. It has all the expanse of a novel but produces the concentrated effect of a short story, thus defying any attempt to pin it down to a fixed form. The central figure of



this story is "Subbanna", a musician, who is beaten into shape by the buffets of bad circumstance and who matures into an emancipated soul. In the very last paragraph of the story, the author sums up by saying that "Subbanna" had realised the essence of philosophy through music and if this were not liberation, nothing else could be that. "Subbanna" is really a great story because it ennobles us by its simple and subtle art.

The two novels that follow are historical in theme and are entirely different in their treatment. The first one is "Channa Basava Nayaka", named after the young prince of Bidanur, a small principality of Keladi Dynasty situated in Karnataka. The political happenings in this state during the 18th century, leading to its downfall form the main subject of this novel. The international dissensions in the royal family lend themselves easily to clever intervention by an external power like that of Haidar Ali. All the characters in this tragic drama, both good and bad, have been depicted with an unerring sense of human character. This novel showed for the first time how the author could handle a historical theme on a broad canvas with a firm grip on fact and local colour. The second novel entitled "Chikkavira Rajendra" is bigger in magnitude and has a broader canvas. It, however, gains in importance because it raises a regional story to one of national significance in the most unobtrusive manner. In "Channa Basava Nayaka" the external power is Haidar Ali; in "Chikkavira Rajendra" the external power is the foreign invader, the Englishman,<sup>1</sup> wears the mask of a generous benefactor, while actually his strategy is to swallow the small kingdom of Coorg with the consent of everybody concerned and to convert the king and his people to his religion to the extent possible. The chapters 85 to 95 of this novel reveal this strategy as depicted by the masterly art of Masti in minute detail. It is in this context that a sensitive reader not only feels agony at the fall of a small state but also the fall of the whole of India at the feet of the British. In every aspect of plot, character and diction, this novel is the great achievement of a mature artist. The turbulence of human passions and the disastrous deluge they create are portrayed in "Chikkavira Rajendra".<sup>2</sup> This is evident from the very opening chapter of the novel but it should be noted that this turbulence is characterised by succinctness, typical of the author and is quite different from the lengthiness and the emotional overtones found in some historical fiction. As a result, it sometimes loses its

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1. L. S. Seshagiri Rao : *Masti Venkatesa Iyengar*, Page. 41

2. *Ibid* : Page 45



force and vigour. The close of the novel is not as impressive as the beginning, though it discloses certain facts, that a reader is interested in knowing.

### Poetry

The poetry of Masti is as varied as his short story, being devotional, lyrical, narrative and dramatic. Among his first collections we come across "Binnaha" and "Aruna", which heralded the new age of modern Kannada poetry along with poetry of Panje, Sri and Bendre. The personality of the poet which is God-centred finds its genuine expression in the devotional songs of "Binnaha" which are sincere to the core, whereas the aesthetic response to nature and life is expressed in the lyrical poems of "Aruna". The latter trend continues in later collections such as "Tavare" and "Cheluvu". His sonnets are put together in "Matara." Another bunch of devotional songs is to be found in "Manavi." In all this poetic and devotional self-expression, there is the imprint of a mature mind and soul, though only some of it rises to a height. It is generally simple and devoid of complexity. In its best it has its subtlety and significance.

It is in narrative poetry that we find Masti's diversity and power. He started telling stories in blank verse through the stories of place-names and those about Kanakadasa. He switched on to different patterns of verse in "Goudara Malli", "Ramanavami" and "Mookana Makkalu", all these attaining a high standard of narration and interpretation.

His narrative ability in verse reached its high watermark in the collection of varied stories in verse called "Navaratri" and in his long poem "Ramapattabhisheka." The technique of the latter is one of retrospect, through which the entire story of the *Ramayana* is recounted by different characters, who have played their role in it, on the last day of Rama's exile. This poem of nearly 10,000 lines in blank verse, is unique in its rational and far from conventional approach to the incidents in it and mainly to the character of Rama who is depicted as an ideal human being and not as an incarnation of God.

Masti has to his credit a good number of plays, based on mythological, historical and social themes. Some of them are verse plays, some others have a mixture of verse and prose and song. His earlier experiments in play-writing as in "Santa", "Savitri" and "Usha" are praiseworthy for their delicate portrayal of character and elegant style. Later he wrote more



powerful plays as in "Kaakana Kote", "Yasodhara", "Talikote" and "Bhattara Magalu", exemplifying his wide interest and confident handling. "Kaakana Kote" is tribal in theme and spirit, "Yasodhara" deals with Buddha's meeting with his wife, "Talikote" is historical, whereas "Bhattara Magalu" is social.

Masti was among the first few Kannada writers, who spelt out the essential features of literature and criticism and who draw the attention of the reading public to the beauty of folk literature. His independent approach to the great Indian classics, viz., the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, found full vent in his works, "Aadi Kavi Valmiki" and "Bhaarata Tirtha". He has produced fine renderings into Kannada of some of Shakespeare's plays as *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *The Tempest*. He has put into English his "Subbanna" and several of his stories and thus enables non-Kannada lovers of literature to have a glimpse of his mind and art.

One can see from this brief survey of the vast and variegated literary treasure of Masti, that his contribution to modern Kannada literature is unique and substantial. More than anything else, it is the aroma of sweetness, light and wisdom which it spreads and will continue to spread for all time to come.

## A Poem

N. RANGANATHAN

All thro the garish day  
The moth lay hidd'n in shady bow'rs  
But as soft ev'ning came  
With gentle Zephyr balmy fragrance  
Lo! she unfurled her wings  
And sped fast to her lover — The Flame.

She fluttered and danced with joy  
And in her rare ecstasy of love  
In her fierce delight of surrender  
She died!

Even so wert Thou, my love,  
Suffering when loving, ceasing when hungering.

— COURTESY Mr. C. A. Reddy

24 Nov. 1919



THIRUVAITHEE, OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1964

## MASTI DARSANA

### The World of Srinivasa : The Grandsire of Kannada Letters

Dr. PREMA NANDAKUMAR

The Kannada-speaking people proudly proclaim: Masti is our *Aasti* (heritage). Indeed, this laureate of Universal Man is not bounded by linguistic or even national barriers; he is verily the treasure-house of the undying Indian spirit, but ever new in seeking fresh adventures in consciousness while being firmly rooted in Sanatana Dharma as exemplified by Valmiki and Vyasa. A legend in his own lifetime, it has been but pure joy for his numberless admirers that the grandsire who has given us a short story like "Acharyara Hendati" and a novel like *Chikkaveera Rajendra* (1956) has just been awarded the Vagdevi Prize. That the Award could have been made any time during the last 20 years with equal justification is no reason, however, why it shouldn't be applauded unreservedly today. Though the above historical novel (no mean achievement by any standard) is cited for the Vagdevi presentation, the Award is actually more of a salutation to one who has been a tireless votary of the Goddess of Speech for nearly the last three quarters of a century.

*Rajasevaprakashta* Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, popularly known by his pen-name "Srinivasa", was born on 6 June 1891 at the village Masti in Mysore. While his home-tongue is Tamil, his native speech is Kannada. He had a brilliant scholastic career, graduated from the Madras University and entered the Mysore Administrative Service. With his intelligence, application and attention to detail, he was to prove both an efficient and a humane officer.

In the course of his official duties, he came into close contact with the mass of humanity, a circumstance that enriched his natural flair for folklore and interest in the rural scene.



Just as the dally encounters with the patients in his surgery helped William Carlos Williams to gain an uncanny insight into the ways of thinking, feeling and speaking of the "common" people, Masti's encounters with the so-called "unlettered" were to make him a percipient reader of the human heart in its convulsions as well as its exultations. Masti opted for premature retirement when his claims for appointment as Minister were overlooked, and he plunged into a full-time career of service to the cause of Kannada letters. This was in the early 'Forties. He toured Karnataka extensively and generated widespread enthusiasm among the elite as also the common people. With the increased pace of literary activity in all fields and in varied forms, the modern age of Kannada literature was taken to almost the apex of manifold fulfilment. In the 'Forties and 'Fifties and after, nearly every literary meet found Masti present as its president or mentor or well-wisher, and not unoften as its subject as well.

For Masti was a tireless writer and evangelist of letters then as now. Known for many decades as the 'Father' of the Kannada short story, he blazed a brilliant trail by himself inditing several collections of short stories in prose and verse, beginning with the unforgettable "Stalagala Hesarugalu" (Names of Places). A short tale like "Rama Navami" is a typical poetic Masti-darsana, for the story is cast in such a way that the aspiring human heart from below and the answering Grace from above are brought together in a moment of stilled silence. The story of "Rama Navami" could be the folk-belief of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana taking a brief rest under the tree in *this* village, the home of Javare Gowda. But the "blind" faith is also an existential truth as far as Gowda's son and daughter-in-law are concerned. Reality is what we see around; wisdom lies in seeing the supreme Truth within the arc of this reality. Such wisdom keeps us to the right, safe path in our life-crossing. That this wisdom comes from culture and not literacy is amply borne out by Javare Gowda and the old lady of the Biligiri forests.

Another aspect of Masti's art is his fine and inspiring celebration of woman: as wife, as beloved, as daughter, as mother. Even Malli, who guards the Gowda's fields at night and becomes his "flame", is depicted with compassionate understanding in "Gowdara Malli." "Mookana Makkalu" is a paean to Motherhood while "Acharyara Hendati" is a melting reconstruction of Ramanuja's wife. Tradition has handed down to us a Xanthippe in her. But can that be the whole truth? The girl had been brought up in a tradition-bound household; she was justly proud



of her "Status" as the celebrated Ramanuja's wife. Her attitude could have been rectified with a little patience, perhaps; however, that was not to be. After a long, long time she manages to reach the place in Mysore State where Ramanuja has taken his residence. She knows it is too late; she cannot, will not, reveal herself. But the accumulated pressures of culture handed down to the Indian woman by Savitri, Sita, Anasuya, Arundhati and Ahalya bring forth the incandescent transformation. Her sacrifice perhaps saved Ramanuja, and hence his Darsana too for all time to come. Who but a creative and compassionate artist like Masti, lit within by the living tradition, could have thus recorded the silent heroism of Mother India's daughters? And "Mosarina Mangamma" is the apotheosis of village life.

There is, then, the immortal story, "Masumatti", exquisitely rendered into Tamil by Rajaji as "Venuganam." It explores the endless search for perfection in art, signified by Perialwar in his *pasuram* about the sublimity of Krishna's flute-music which makes even animals forget their feed and stand as painted pictures. Masti's involvement with this theme is also seen to great advantage in "Kaviya Konaya Dine" based on Goethe's life, and the novelette "Subbanna," distantly paralleled by Romain Rolland's *Jean Christophe*.

Masti's *Navaratri* contains nineteen stories in verse. A group of friends who come together during Dasara begin to tell a story each. The stories are as varied as the story-tellers, and are not bound by barriers of time, language and geography. Heroism (Jeanne D'Arc), Self-sacrifice (Musilamma), Folklore (Sojigada Holalu) and Satire (Samadiya Sattva) are some of the motifs in this collection which takes us back to the *Canterbury Tales* of Geoffrey Chaucer.

The narrative poetry of *Navaratri* is, of course, a natural extension of Masti's gentle lyricism in *Aruna*, *Sunita* and *Cheluva Devi*. *Bhinnala* and *Manavi* stand witness to his devotional stance, the sincerity of a soul deep-drenched in seeing the divine as ubiquitously present in the life around us. His genius for minting titles that tug at your heart-strings can be seen in "Muridu Bidda Veerakallu." *Malara* contains more than eighty lyrics based on the sonnet form (*ashta-sasti*) of English prosody, and are all of them the sensitive ruminations of a pilgrim of eternity.

One of Masti's earliest dramas was *Yasodhara* (1933), which tells us of Buddha's compassion and his wife's serene acceptance of the situation when the former returns to Kapilavastu. Masti's *Talikota*, a historical playlet, was staged by the Karnatak Sangh,



Bombay, on 27 March 1938. In another play, "Kakana Kota" (The Fort of Kaka), the celebrated Ruler of Mysore, Ranadhira Kantirava, appears as one of the characters. Kaka is a shepherd-hero whose imaginative boldness makes him the much-awaited deliverer for the innocent tribal people. *Masati* (The Great Lady) is a tragedy flowing from the practice of suttee. His most recent play is *Kalidasa* (1980), a rasika's attempt to reconstruct the probable life-history of the Prince of Poets, weaving a web of relationships between the man and his work, or Life and Letters.

Masti has gifted Kannada literature with two of its best historical novels, *Channa Basava Nayaka* (1950) and *Chikkaveera Rajendra* (1956), the former located in Bidanur which was overrun by Hyder Ali, and the latter located in Coorg, which was taken over by the British. He is not interested in the mere glorification or desecration of the historical past. For Masti, whether drawn from life or history (which is "life" too, yesterday's life, recorded or reconstructed life), once he started writing about certain people, they became *his* characters, they grew as he wrote, they acquired a new individuality and reality of their own. In both the novels the theme is inner decay and disintegration, and the external force — Hyder Ali in Bidanur, the British in Coorg — at once accelerates and completes the collapse and also initiates the process of reconstruction. And alas! the law of Karma operates, as much in individuals' lives as in the destinies of nations. In L. S. Seshagiri Rao's words, "Masti shows how the very institutions devised to maintain stability and act as brakes on tyranny only accelerate the process of decay, when the human agents fail, either because they are too weak or because they mistake the priorities." Although, as "case studies," the two novels concentrate on small nation-states, they embody also a philosophy of history applicable to the decline and fall of India as a whole during the 18th century. And there is a lesson for the future too, which we should not miss.

A creative artist, yes. Also an intellectual giant. Masti's *Poetry of Valmiki* (1941) remains a classic of intuitive criticism. Exhorting his readers to peruse the *Ramayana* as a masterpiece of literature, Masti compares it with the world's greatest epics like *The Divine Comedy*, the *Aeneid* and *Paradise Lost*, and hopes that the *Ramayana's* message may yet redeem mankind. His "K. Balasubramania Iyer Lectures" on the *Mahabharata* are stimulating. One may not agree with him all the time. But one cannot escape the Masti spell when he utters great truths in simple words:



"Kunti is a great mother of great children and one of the ideals pictured by Vyasa. The centuries gave her a unique place in the popular imagination as mother. Places in a number of localities are believed by our people to be the spot where she lived with her children; in one place she cooked for them; in another she pounded grain; in still another she carried water; in a fourth, Bhīma made a well with a blow from his mace for her use, when she needed water for cooking. Kunti is also the mother in popular imagination of sons, who, happen what may, cannot have a kingdom. They may be kings or not, but she is the mother of kings. And woman's fortune in the long run is to be a great mother."

Valmiki and Vyasa have been the perennial sources of Masti's inspiration, as of most writers in India. Kalidasa has been another constant inspiration, and Masti has acknowledged the influence of Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Scott, of Bankim Chandra and Tagore, and of Tolstoy and the other great Russian novelists. Masti's monograph on Tagore is the tribute of one great writer to another and an elder, and is marked by enthusiasm as well as critical divination. His debt to Kannada literature is incommensurable, and his *Popular Culture in Karnataka* has a ready appeal.

Masti's Convocation Addresses, Presidential pronouncements and seminar-papers contain nuggets of wisdom and are of much contemporaneous relevance. A labour of love, his *Rajaji: A Study of his Personality* (1976) is an unconventional biography which eminently succeeds in bringing to life the greatness and manifoldness of Rajaji's personality. In the course of the telling, the entire spectrum of the glory and the good of the Independence Movement, the slippery pathways of political life, the Damocles' Sword of the nuclear threat and the beautiful private garden of Rajaji's friendships which cultivated with love, courtesy and humour, all spring to life. And the Divine has given us the Grace of having Masti still with us, active as ever, contemplative, weaving through his pen a magic mantle of safety for us in terms of Bhakti, literary beauty and the joy of life.

It was not that Masti was self-absorbed all the time with his writing alone. He is a widely loved writer today because, even a half-century earlier, he was equally interested in encouraging the younger generation of writers. Unveiling his portrait on 20 January 1940 for the Kannada Authors' Association, Sri B. M. Srikantia referred to Masti as "the idol of the Kannada country" and a source of inspiration to young writers.



Renowned authors like D. R. Bendre, V. Sitaramaiah, P. T. Narasimhachar and K. V. Puttappa spoke on Masti's achievements as a short story-writer, poet, playwright, critic and conversationalist. His 61st birthday was celebrated on 18 and 19 June 1951 at Bangalore's Shri Krishnaraja Parishanmandira under the presidentship of Navaratna Rama Rao. Masti's untiring efforts to make the Kannadigas feel proud of their heritage was the subject of many a speech, while everyone agreed that he was a colossus in the scene of the Kannada renaissance. Three years later, when Masti became the President of the Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Prof. S. S. Hoskot was to write in *The Times of India* :

"A sensitive and refined lyric and devotional poet, a dramatist of distinction, a critic of refreshing charm and above all, the first as well as the best of short story-tellers — the sixty-three-year-old Masti Venkatesa Iyengar holds a unique place among the Kannada men of letters writing today ... The number of artists whom he has encouraged and assisted by example and precept, to discover their own talents, is perhaps greater than that of his own works. That indeed is the least of tributes that can be paid to him; it is the greatest that can be paid to him; it is the greatest that can be paid to any man."

As for "honours", the Sahitya Akademi Award came to Masti in 1968 for his *Sanna Kathegalu* 12-13. The present Vagdevi Award is for *Chikkaveera Rajendra*. He has been for the last so many years the widely respected National President of the P. E. N. All-India Centre. And he is one of the immortals of the Sahitya Akademi, having been elected to its Fellowship a decade ago. But the man and his message are something apart from such honours and awards. Masti's life is an exemplary one, that of the hero as a writer. What does he think of this long life, what are his views on the problems of the litterateur in India? Has it been worth it, the struggle, the bearing of the cross, the exposing of one's creative faculty to the gaze of the multitude? He has himself given the answer recently in the course of an interview:

"I come back to our ancient ideal:

the writer is *atma-deep* (the Soul's Light).

What's our vocation but to speak boldly  
to the people of our time

and help them move from Darkness to Light,  
and leave the terrors behind?

Perhaps, it's hardly more than a candle,  
aye, with a flickering flame:

it may yet mean much to the wayfarer  
trapped in the encircling gloom."



## In Quest of the Buddha

EUGENE D'VAZ

I take you along the cobbled path of night  
Questions hang from the blinking stars  
The one worth asking  
Is framed around the petals of the lotus.

Across the moon-made shadows  
We stumble on the rough stones  
Till the white bird of heaven  
Descends with the promise of an answer  
Twittering out in soft monosyllables.

The cobblestones wake up from their bed  
Of chained ledgers.

Ragged children of the sun  
Only your warm hand  
Makes me take the thrust towards  
The answer to our mangled questions.

The Enlightened One whispers  
The armies of the night jab our sides  
Into gashes spewing blood and water  
Turning into the flowers of our innocence.

Buddha smiles through every aperture  
Of the twisting gyrating throng.

The flowers rush in a hurricane  
Into our rib cages  
Only your warm hand  
Awakens in a burst the dying bonfire of the night  
Buddha holds his hand back  
In benediction over the lost ones.

Eight arches glimmer  
In the night of our quest  
The wailing goes up to meet  
Angel voices streaming down air currents

Only your hand on my aging limbs  
Tells me that I have to live  
That the Buddha still waits  
That the question is yet to be asked.



## MASUMATTI

( A short story )

MASTI VENKATESA IYENGAR

( *Translated from Kannada by Navaratna Rama Rao* )

[ My grandfather was Mr. Courtenay's Judicial clerk — or 'Jodi shawl Sheristedar,' as we call that official, substituting words we know for unfamiliar ones. Quite recently, while rummaging among old *daftars* in my house to sort out useless papers for destruction, I happened upon a file of documents relating to my grandfather's days, and found among them part of a diary kept by Mr. Courtenay. I had seen Mr. Courtenay, and have dim recollections of a gift or two of sweetmeats from him. He was a good and kindly man. I opened his diary at random, and glanced over a few pages. What I saw there made me read the whole of it. I did so forthwith for it was short and I could finish it at a sitting. It interested me, and I give it in the hope it may interest you. ]

There is a beautiful story current among Hindus. After slaying Ravana, Sri Rama, it is said, meant to go to Lanka to place Vibhishana on the throne, but at the gate of the conquered city he saw a lovely sapphire, which awakened in him such strong desire that his mind misgave him as to the temptations that awaited within. This made him forbear to enter, and send Lakshmana instead, to attend to the business of installation,

This country is as Lanka to us — but, alas! we are not as Rama. It is as though the call, "Give up all and follow me", has been really the lure of wealth, for, from the very outset, our intercourse with this country has led to the gradual transfer of its substance to us. We never see a beautiful object here, but we wish to take it home.

This is what set me thinking of this. My sister Emily and her husband have come on a visit and are spending a few days with me. John Farquhar loves this land — I know none



other of our people who loves it so well. He knows the people, their speech and their ways. He knows all that is best in this hoary civilisation; he understands and loves the sculptured perfection of these temples. To name him is to recall his services in interpreting this country to ours, in giving to our people an idea of the beauty of this age-long culture, and the wonderful way in which it endures and permeates the everyday lives of this people. He has visited all places where there is anything to see—ancient temples and monasteries, remains of palaces and royal dynasties; and everywhere he has sought and seen old pictures, antique statues, ancient works of art. His heart has gone out to all he saw, and who so reads his glowing pages must understand and appreciate, even as he did. The people of India must feel grateful to him; and in all he has done, Emily has been with him and has learnt to love this country.

Farquhar has got together a fairly large number of pictures and statues from wherever he could beg or buy them, and it is his hope to form a museum of his own when his collection is complete. On their way to me, they visited the Ajanta caves, and Farquhar could talk of nothing else; but Emily was so silent that I asked her why. She was quite delighted, she said; yet there was a thing that made her sad. What thing? I asked.

"Oh, hardly a *thing*," she said, "a mere thought, perhaps no more than a fancy. I said to myself—these excellent men who painted, couldn't they have painted on paper or canvas? For so, we could have bought the pictures, at whatever price, and called them ours, and taken them home. Whatever made them paint on rocks to awaken but mock our wishes?"

I smiled, for what Emily said seemed quite natural and proper, coming as it did from a laudable enthusiasm for Indian art. To desire the beautiful is, I suppose, human nature.

The talk came round to the temples and places of historical interest in my division.

"I have heard there's a place called Masumatti in your division", said Farquhar, "and I am told there's a man there that has some splendid old pictures. (He proceeded to give the man's name and other details.) I should like to get a picture or two from him if I can. Do you think you can help me?"

I consented, for I was only too glad to help in anything which could make the world see the true greatness of this country. And so we went to Masumatti yesterday.



Masumatti is now a mere hamlet — it has decayed as far as the village can decay without becoming *bechirakh* (lightless), the word by which these people denote the night desolation of an uninhabited village. Besides the few straggling houses in the outskirts, there are but four or five in the village itself. The inhabitants are all cultivators. When I had gone there a few days earlier, I had met an old man sunning himself on the verandah of his house. I asked him why the village had come to this pass. I don't know how it happens — but these people, even the humblest, have a grasp of basic truths, and there is philosophy in their ordinary talk. Their peasants have the manners of princes, and there is a deep inward peace in their everyday lives. Well, when I asked the old man why his village was decayed,

“All towns have to decay” he answered.

“But”, said I, “there are some that grow?”

“They grow in growing time, and that over, they decay.”

“Had your town ever a growing time?” I asked. It was a foolish question, but I wanted to get the old man to talk of his village. He smiled as he made answer:

“Can age come unless youth have gone before?”

And then he went on to say that this crumbling village had been the far-famed *Mahishmatinagara* of the Puranas where Kartaviryarjuna had once reigned in his glory, and where hundreds of royal houses had succeeded him and flourished and fallen in their turn; till finally it had been overwhelmed fighting against Mussalman invaders and dwindled into a hamlet. It had continued on its downward way till, as I could see, there were but four houses left. It seemed strange to identify this all but *bechirakh* village with the Mahishmati of ancient story, but the old man had no doubt whatever on the subject. He showed me a stone *mantap* where Arjuna of the thousand arms had been wont to take his exercise. He showed me likewise the pond where the hero used to perform his daily ablutions, and the temple where he rendered daily worship. He told me of a *mantap* where Ravana had been held prisoner, and made to dance for the amusement of the Mahishmati people, as a great glittering ten-headed monster. The captive had at first refused to perform, but Arjuna had struck him so, that he started up in rage and pain striking ten dents, with his ten heads, into the stone ceiling of the prison. The dents — the old man said — could be seen to this day. That is the way with these people. No village is too small or insignificant to be worthy of association with gods and heroes, and the days are not past when divine beings trod the earth. This old man was only talking as is usual with him and his sort; but, no doubt, this



village had been a mighty town in its day. Look at the *mantap*, for instance, which had been the many-armed hero's gymnasium, and at the multi-pillared prison of the Rakshasa. They were low-roofed to be sure; but what immense stones, what solidity and cleanness of build! This surely was the work of no feeble men. The pond, which had been Arjuna's bathing place, was a hundred and fifty yards square, with broad steps of dressed stone, so well-planned and so truly jointed that the thousands of years which had desolated countries and destroyed dynasties had wrought hardly a change in the structure. This was without a doubt the work of builders who had gloried in their skill, and known the joy of creating beautiful structures. There is yet a little water in that pond, and it laps the foot of the same tier of steps all round, so justly have they been built, and so little has time touched them. And then that temple. To eyes accustomed to the exquisite lines of Greek art, and the massive majesty of our own architecture, there is at first a disappointing sense of something crude and inconsequential in Indian building and sculpture; but take a temple as a whole, and the effect is far from unsatisfying. This temple I am speaking of is of the usual type — carefully built and finished; the slabs and stones fitted with workman-like neatness and precision. It is still in a fair state of preservation. There is an image in the temple, but no worship has taken place for years.

And in the village itself, there are long lines of crumbling foundations of what must have been palatial houses, laid out in streets, in the goodly order of a well-planned town. My old friend pointed out what had been the Brahmana street; another row of ruins had been the jewellers' street, and so on .....

Now, mere emptiness and silence; even the imagination can hardly people that wilderness of crumbling walls.

When yesterday I made enquiries about the pictures my brother-in-law wished to see, I found that my old friend was the owner of them. We sent for him. He came out, and saluting us with old-world courtesy, begged us to enter. This man had a lofty graciousness which seemed to spring from an innate nobility of soul.

"Are you Mr. Krishnayya?" asked Farquhar.

"Yes, sir."

"I have some business with you; that's why we came."

"I am at your service."

"I have heard that you have some beautiful old pictures. I have come to see them if I may."



"I haven't many, but such as I have, you are welcome to see. Pray, come in and be seated."

We took our seats in the hazara hall. The old gentleman went in and brought a few pictures. They were painted with very ordinary colours on indifferent canvas made by laying some waxy paste on cloth. The lines were flowing and graceful. Some pictures looked as though parts had been erased and re-drawn, while others remained as they had come from the inspired mind of the artist. His touch must have been wonderfully light and sure. One of them was a picture of Gopalakrishna. A look at it sufficed to tell you how real Gopalakrishna must have been to the artist.

What words can express the beauty of the pose, the daintiness of the fingers which held the flute to the wooing lips, the infinite tenderness of the eyes. The body was gracefully poised on one foot, so that the garland hung a little aslant on the bosom. All this is easy to describe, but who can describe the atmosphere of rapt and silent absorption — as though all sound, all sense, all nature, had been merged and lost in an infinite harmony — the listening stillness of the trees, the various poses of cow and calf surprised and spell-bound in the act of grazing or gambol, the ecstatic groups of gods and *rishis* and *gopikas*? This man, surely, saw his God as he painted Him. Emily and Farquhar were in raptures.

"Whose work is this?"

"My grandfather's."

"He had genius."

"My family has not produced such another."

"Did he paint other pictures?"

"Oh, he painted a good many but they were most of them like this one, pictures of Gopalakrishna. He delighted in making pictures of the God. Well, he painted, and painted ... and this is what remains of it all."

The old man went in and brought out a *daftar* which we found to contain a number of pictures of the God, differing but little from one another. Some were almost replicas of one another, while others differed only in general effect. There were sixteen of them altogether.

"He made them — and he put each by sadly, as not quite the vision that had been vouchsafed to him. Then he began another. Finally he had this — the one you have already seen."

Farquhar looked up with interest.



"Did he say he was satisfied that this picture expressed his vision?" he asked.

"No. A few days later, he started painting another. I heard that, before he put his hand to it, he was for ten or twelve days wrapped up in worship and meditation. It was strange life, sir, my grandfather's. At the end of that time he started up from meditation crying, 'My God is come!' and bade his wife bring cocoanuts, and flowers, and fruit for worship. Then he sat down to paint. The day was far stepped into the afternoon, and he was still at his picture. Later, his elder brother who had finished his daily worship, came and sat silently near him. All the children — and my grandmother who being big with my father was not allowed to remain fasting — had long since finished their meal. My grandfather and his brother were the only people who hadn't dined. It was almost evening, and my grandfather continued working at his picture. Then came a cry that the marauders were upon us. The gates were closed, and the whole town swarmed to the ramparts. My grandfather was a man of great courage. He rose up saying, 'Perhaps it is not God's pleasure that this picture should be finished today'; and with a lingering look at it, he seized his bow and quiver, and went out. Our women, it seems, begged my grandfather to dine before going out; but he only laughed and said that the meal might wait, but the fight would not, and so went out. His brother also said, 'Never mind, he'll be coming back presently', and waited for him. I have heard that my grandfather so far yielded to the importunities of the women as to eat one of the plantains used for worship, and that was all. The raiders were in great force, and we were but few; the wiser part would have been nothing loath, and some there were that counselled this course; but my grandfather was a man of spirit, and with a few men of like heart, he ran up and down the ramparts seeking to organise defence. Some robber marked him, and shot him down with a matchlock. Presently help came to us from our men who hastened back from their fields to defend their home, and we beat off the marauders. When it was all over, they brought my grandfather home. The bullet had entered his breast, and there was no more than a faint spark of life when they brought him in. They say he opened his eyes once and said, 'Oh, yes, I'll come back presently, for I must finish my picture', and his spirit passed. I think his mind had gone back to his leaving the picture to go to the fight. My granduncle, who was so much the elder that he had been a father to my grandfather, beat his breast and cried, 'Oh my boy, Oh my boy, could I not give you a mouthful of food before sending you to your death!' and he was broken-hearted,



To make a sad story short, they cremated him and performed his obsequies, but my granduncle was never the same man again. He spent most of his time at the door as though in expectation of somebody; and as he oldened, he took to muttering strange things such as, 'No, he won't come.' 'Who knows what was in his mind?' 'Oh, but he will!' and so he too passed away."

The old man ceased, and we respected his silence. After a while Farquhar said in a low voice:

"Where's the picture he painted that day?"

"It is inside."

"Won't you kindly show it to us?"

"I have heard my elders say it should not be shown."

"Why?"

"It is unfinished, and there may be faults in it. People might say it is not a good piece of work, and that would vex a workman. It might lower the artist in the estimation of people."

"My dear sir, your artist was a hero and a genius, and has nothing to fear from detractors — and we are not detractors. Do let us see the picture."

"Very well then, so be it. I doubt whether I should have shown it if you had come by yourselves, but I cannot disoblige a lady, and she is eager to see. There was yet another reason — a very fanciful reason it may seem to you — why my granduncle was unwilling to let this picture be seen. His brother's last words had been that he would come again and finish the picture and my granduncle believed he would do so."

"Did your grandfather say he would come back?"

"Well, so at least they understood him. And it grew into a feeling in our house that our grandfather would be reborn in our midst to complete his picture. We did not wish to show it to others till he had come and completed it. When my father was born, it is said my granduncle anxiously watched him for evidences of his father's genius, as a token that he had come again in his son to take up the unfinished work. But no. When I came, he looked for them in me. But again, no. He said, 'My brother was a boy of his word; he is sure to come some day; take good care of the picture', and so he died. My father showed it once to our *guru*, and now I show it again as something in the lady's face makes me feel I might show it to her."

He went inside the house again and brought two pictures of which he placed one before us.



I was spell-bound by the picture. There was magic in each line — and I despair to convey it in words. It was as though the artist had caught and fixed the air, all tremulous and undulating with the music of the flute. Though the details were as in the other pictures we had seen, there was yet some indefinable difference which made it instinct with life and unearthly beauty. Emily gazed on it in breathless rapture.

“Is this the unfinished picture?” she asked at last.

“No. This other” — and he spread out the second picture before us.

“My God!” said Emily with a gasp.

We looked at it in silence for a while. It was a supreme picture.

“What did the artist intend painting below this cow, I wonder?” said Farquhar when he found his voice. There was a faint wavy line or two as of an outline commenced and broken off.

“I don’t know. It was just as he was about to fill the canvas there that the alarm came, and he went out to die.”

I looked again, and it seemed to me that the artist had means to put in another cow there; but one couldn’t be sure. Emily was still regarding the picture in silence. I asked the old man if no one had hazarded a guess as to what the artist’s intention might have been.

“There is my daughter’s little boy,” said the old man; “he said something. Nobody else could make anything of it.”

“Sir,” said Farquhar, “if you could sell me that picture, I would take it home with me and make your grandfather’s name famous in my country. Will you give it to me?”

“Sir, how can I? My granduncle forbade us even to show it!”

“It is not for my own use or pleasure that I ask it — it is to secure to your grandfather the recognition that is his due. It is for the glory of your village and your country.”

“But what if he returns as he promised?”

“Who? Your grandfather? Venerable sir, can you for a moment believe it? Just think!”

“What matters our thinking?” rejoined the old man. “He knows best who promised.” “It is clearly our duty to keep the picture here waiting for him — and that was the wish of our elders also. The rest is as God wills.”



Farquhar merely said, "All right, but please think about it again. We aren't in a hurry. We shall come again, in four or five days, and shall be very pleased to hear your decision."

Emily did not seem to have heard this talk. She suddenly looked up from the picture.

"Shall I tell you what was in the artist's mind to paint here?"

"Do," I said.

"It seems to me," said Emily, with a flush on her cheeks, "it seems to me there should have been here a calf on its eager way to the mother's milk, held in mid-career, and fed with the Divine melody. Whoso is fed with milk — even mother's milk — hungers again; but the nectar from the flute fills for evermore. Look, how all things in the picture show that the melody has just begun. The other picture is conventional; this one has seized the moment when the music began."

"Then what my grandchild said was true!" exclaimed the old man.

"What did he say?" we cried.

He said, "'Look how the Lord has even now conceived a thought, and raised the flute to his lips to give it expression. See how the first notes have enchanted the air, and look at this calf surprised on its way to the mother, and fed with music sweeter than milk!' That was what the boy said. And that is what Madam here says now!"

We marvelled at the boy's justness of perception; for really, the air seemed thrilling with music, and there was dawning inspiration on the brow of the Divine flutist.

Farquhar said:

"Bring up this boy of yours to be a painter — believe me, he will make a great one. Tell us when we come again four days hence whether you will give us the picture."

Emily said nothing. Presently we rose to go, and the old gentleman saw us off with the usual parting gift of betel leaves and nut.

But we have no thought now of going there again for the picture. We still want it as keenly as ever; and it is also possible the old man may not resist the temptation of a high price — but we shall not go, and this is why.

On our way back, Emily sat for a while on the stone steps of Kartavirya's pond. Farquhar fetched out our tiffin basket and we had tea.

"What a beautiful pond!" said Emily.



"Beautiful enough", I replied, "but there isn't much water in it now; and look, some fellow has prised off a few stones over there, to build an ugly little house with, very probably."

"Oh, brother," she said, "does it not occur to you that we are doing very much the same kind of thing? There isn't much water in the pond, it is true; but the pond itself is here nevertheless; and if only someone cared for it, and saw that weeds did not spring up and loosen the joints, some day—perhaps years hence—when water came, the pond would be there to hold it. I can almost hear the tinkling anklets and toe-rings of the generations of sweet joyous girls who must have passed up and down these beautiful steps. They may come again—as water may come again—if but the pond continued whole and good; but once pull out the stones, deface and desecrate the pond, and lo! it is but an ugly ditch which all will shun, and which can only become noisome with the return of water!"

"Quite true, Emily, but what are you driving at?"

"What? Do you ask? Why, this: We take away this picture because it is good, that statue because it is beautiful and that other thing because it is desirable, and then what remains to this unfortunate country when she comes to herself, I should like to know? What shall we have done for her?"

"But don't you see we take these things only to proclaim the greatness of this country to the world and not through mere lust of possession?"

"Much good will that kind of fame be to her! You tell this man to make his little boy a painter, and you take away his picture. Is that doing him a great lot of good?"

We got on our horses, and rode slowly homewards. After he had gone some little way, Emily said to me:

"Have you heard, brother, of a belief among these people that sometimes the soul goes wandering forth from its body, leaving it temporarily untenanted, but intending to return to it. It may happen that, in the interval, some other spirit usurps that body to the deprivation of its proper owner."

I said I had heard of such a belief.

"They call it *entry into another's body*. Now supposing a soul leaves its body for a while purposing to return if this, body should be hidden away or disfigured beyond recognition, so that the soul returning cannot find or know it, how forlornly that homeless soul must wander in space!"

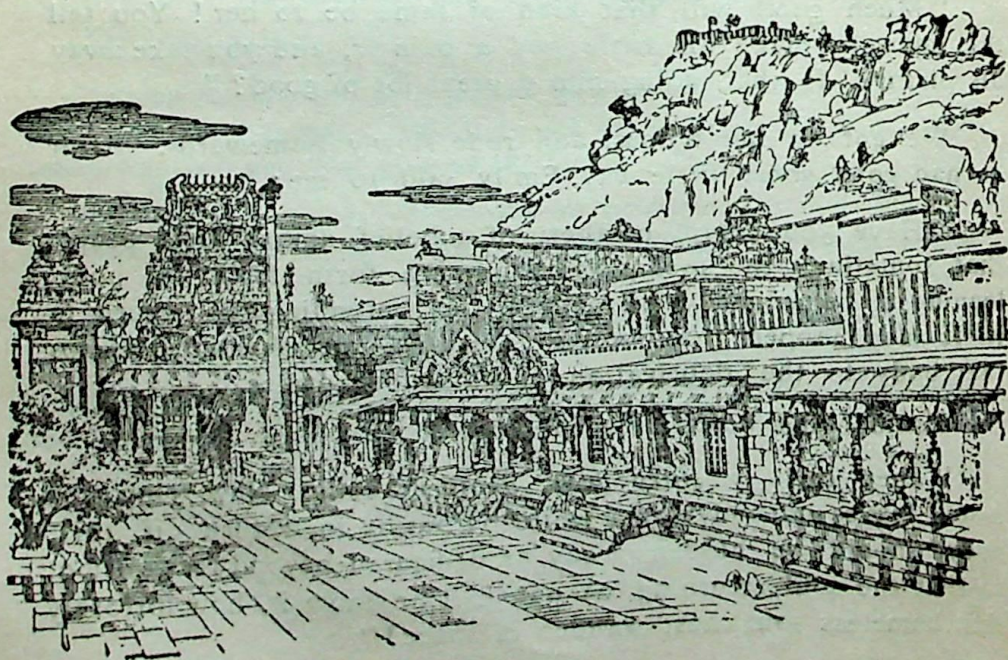


“ True, but what a fancy ! ”

“ Brother, it seems to me that the lovely body they call *Bharata Mata* ( Mother India ) is now in a trance, and that her children are seated weeping about her. But even now, her brow is flushing with the return of the soul. Shall we now deface her frame, deprive her of the things she holds sacred and beautiful, her necklace and rings and bracelets, with the result that the returning soul cannot recognise its own tenement? Is it not just as though we had rapt the body away? The mother's soul may return wishing to wipe her children's tears, but what if the body be not there? Shall we orphan her children? I don't think we ought to do this ! ”

And Emily's eyes filled with tears. Farquhar looked away; his thoughts had probably gone to little George, and he pictured Emily in a trance and George waiting beside her. We rode home in silence, and decided this morning that we should not try to acquire that picture.

This occurrence has confirmed to me another thought I have had for some time. It may be that we can substitute our civilisation for the one these people have lost, but this would be really the usurpation by an alien soul of a body which is waiting for the return of its own.





## THE WORLD OF MASTI

C. H. PRAHLADA RAO

In a quick changing world, Masti, short for Dr. Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, recipient of the Jnanpeeth Award, represents a time-frame of reference.

He is as old as the hills, and has hardly changed. Only his face has deeper furrows. His smile is charming and he speaks in near whisper. He is warm, easy, informal and is hardly conscious of his age. He follows his daily routine, irrespective of the season. He walks briskly, his umbrella follows him wherever he goes, in sun and in rain. A visit to the club in Basavangudi is a ritual without which an evening is incomplete. He talks about everything under the sun. He holds your attention — he has the sweetness of honey, but can also sting like the bee. He is placid, but can also be roused. He is clear-headed. No half-way houses for him. He is firm in his convictions, and makes no bones about them. He does not mind offending men; his loyalty is to truth, as he sees it.

Masti's modest house in Gavipuram looks as it looked years ago. You are greeted by his pet: a parrot, not a dog. He works upstairs. The place is lined with books. It is the study of a writer who has given more than seventy years to writing — a prodigious amount by any standards. More, if you remember that when he started writing as a pioneer, our store was meagre. He presides over a large family. Drop in any afternoon and you find him at play with his grandchildren or great-grandchildren. There is something childlike about him. Incapable of hurting or malice. He puts you at ease. He can converse with a prince, a philosopher or a layman with equal sympathy. The man is a legend.

In fact, Masti has a legendary background. Masti is the name of a hamlet in Kolar, the district which once gave Mysore the reputation of the "land of gold." "*Chinnada nadidu Mysooru*", said



B. M. Srikantiah in his ode to the Kannada land. But the hamlet acquired the name, long ago, in commemoration of one of Masti's kinswoman's self-immolation. The legend is that one of his forefathers was Dewan to a Sultan, and he died when the irate Sultan served him a glass of milk that was poisoned. In grief the Dewan's widow committed self-immolation. She was praised as a woman of virtue, or Maha Sati. In course of time, Maha Sati became Masti and the name stuck to the hamlet. And now Masti has put the unknown hamlet on the map of Kannada letter. He had given it the immortality that the bard gave to Avon.

The legend of Masti begins there. But for Providence, he would have been lost like the poet's "full many a gem of purest ray serene." In spite of want and poverty the boy pursued schooling in nearby villages and completed his matriculation in Mysore. He thrived on scholarships, he got his B. A. from the Central College in Bangalore. He set his heart on M. A. To raise the money, he taught in the Central College for three months. At the Presidency College, Madras, he qualified for the Master's Degree in English. He was awarded a gold medal. The journey from the log cabin to the White House was over when Masti topped the list in the Mysore Civil Service examination. He joined the charmed club of Probationary Assistant Commissioners. He served long and with distinction. He became *Rajasevasaktu*. He retired voluntarily three years sooner as Excise Commissioner. It was Masti's way of protesting against a wrong done to him. His three-volume autobiography "Bhava" gives an account of his career.

Masti was 19 when he wrote his first short story. In fact, he is familiar as the father of the short story as a literary form in Kannada. He began writing in Kannada when it was not considered literary enough. His early stories caused a minor sensation. They were a curiosity like a calf with two heads. In "Rangappa", Masti created a character that endures like Sam. The stories recreated the social setting of an age that is now as strange as Rip Van Winkle's world. Masti's humour is innocent. The newly-married husband seeks romance, his unlettered spouse just knows enough to enquire about his health. Urged to write a long letter, she writes a love letter, the like of which is unknown in any other language — she is well, the cow is well, its calf is well, etc. Masti's contribution to the short story is impressive. There are several collections, *Srinivasa Kathegalu*, after the pseudonym he adopted "Srinivasa." That the Sahitya Akademi, Delhi, gave him the award for the short story was in a way appropriate.

If you remember, Masti should have got the award for his historical novel "Channa Basava Nayaka." The fierce controversy



that surrounded it is an unhappy memory. Literary judgement was overshadowed by extra-literary notions of *Amour propre*. The Jnanpeeth Award for "Chikkavira Rajendra" makes more than ample amends. It recognises Masti's contribution to the novel. "Chikkavira Rajendra" was the literary rage when it appeared nearly thirty years ago. It is set in Coorg, and depicts the story of the last king. The novel is prized highly as one that can stand comparison with the best in any language. It brought pride of place to Kannada.

Masti's versatility is matched by the wealth of his literary output. He is known as a poet and playwright. Among his well-known plays "Yasodhara" and "Kakanakote" are moving theatrical experiences. His radio play "Bhattara Magalu" congeals grief. It has been repeated so often that listeners know the play backwards. As a film "Kakanakote" was a success.

The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are the spiritual centres on which Masti's world moves. "Bharata Tirtha" and "Adi Kavi Valmiki" were among his early scholarly works. His biographical studies of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Rabindranath Tagore became instant classics.

For over 20 years Masti edited a literary journal which he called "Jeevana." His monthly notes kept a record of events. He kept vigil for Kannada, and was quick to take up any cause when Kannada interests were hurt. Did the Sahitya Akademi overlook Kannada for want of a book of sufficient merit? Masti would raise the banner of protest.

Looking back, what is Masti's contribution to Kannada? One would think of his prose, so near to the spoken word. There is a remarkable identity between what he writes and what he speaks. The short sentence in Kannada is his invention. The muse moves about his pages with the lightness of foot you associate with a ballerina. Masti has made the short sentence do all that he wants. He can move you to laughter and tears, he can transport you to another world, he can put terror in your heart, he can whisper sweet nothings in your ear, he can rouse you to a passion. It is Jack that kills the giant. So does his verse. Easy like everyday speech he employs familiar words. But in Masti's hand they undergo a strange transformation. They sparkle like stars in the horizon.

It is time to remember that Masti's mother-tongue is Tamil. Kannada is singularly fortunate. Its literature has been enriched by Kannadigas who acknowledged Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Malayalam, Tulu, Konkani as their mother-tongue. It is an expression of the Kannada genius for assimilation.

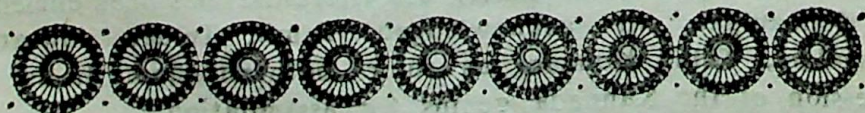


Masti has more decorations than wrinkles on his face. As one of the crusaders of the Kannada movement in the decades before independence, he was honoured by the Kannada Sahitya Parishat in various ways. In later years he received new honours as Vice-President and then as President of the Indian P E N. He was conferred a Doctorate in Letters by the Karnataka University. The Sahitya Akademi, Delhi, elected him a Fellow, and now Jnanpeeth has decorated him.

Go back for a moment to 1891 and think of the hardships Masti as a boy endured to school himself. He lost his father early but he did not give up his quest. Like an architect he fashioned his life. He could have lost himself in office but he knew his real calling was literature. The Maharajah decorated him. But he does not sport it. So unassuming, so modest, like a traveller, he is more conscious of the road ahead than of the road behind. He had endeared himself to the Kannada people so far that dear Masti has gone into a proverb, "Masti Kannadada Asti." It means that Masti is a precious asset of Kannada.

That is the ultimate test of a writer's genius. He is remembered by what he had written. You take any work, *Subbanna* for instance, a short novel on the life of a musician. Long after you have read, the memory endures like the poet's vision of a rainbow or a dam. And for Kannadigas, this is a fine hour.

— COURTESY *The Hindu*





## INDIRA GANDHI

Dr. D. ANJANEYULU

For some reason or other, T. S. Eliot described April as the cruellest month in England. For us, however, October (of the Orwellian year of 1984) was undoubtedly the cruellest month in the history of free India. It was on the last day of this month that the folly of man and his foulness cast a dark shadow on this country, the darkest ever in public memory.

Darker perhaps that what befell the nation, some 36 years ago (on 30 January 1948) when Mahatma Gandhi fell to an assassin's bullet.

It was on a cold winter morning (on 31 October) that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was brutally done to death by two of her Sikh security men.

The only difference being that there were then a good number of national leaders, like Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel, Rajen Babu, Maulana Azad, Rajaji and others who could guide the people and control the destiny of the country. We can hardly say the same thing of the present situation. But there is always bound to be the man to rise to the occasion. And he will find his own band of men to help him not only to keep the nation together, but take it forward in the coming years.

During the last 18 or 19 years, we, in this country, had got used to the idea of looking up to Indira Gandhi for guidance, initiative and courage, for leadership and inspiration. She was the constant point of reference for her critics as well as her followers, for the Opposition as well as the party in power, for the whole country of 700 million — in fact, every man, woman and child. She was a living source of the national perspective, the progressive imperative and the urge for collective action. It would be difficult to think of any other political leader, whose image is so deeply engraved in the minds and hearts of her people. Nor



do we know the secret of her charisma which lasted so long, which neither ballot could affect nor bullet could destroy.

*"Vajradapi kathorani; mriduni kusumaadapi."* — "Softer than a flower; harder than a diamond." These are the words that come to one's mind when we think of the complex and compelling personality of Indira Gandhi.

She didn't conform to the familiar stereotype of the Indian politician; she was too civilized for that.

She was an aristocrat to her fingertips, who walked with kings and queens, Presidents and Prime Ministers, but she always kept the common touch. Nor was she ruthless like the old dictators, nor showy and sentimental, like the new breed of populist leaders.

A stickler for order and discipline, she ruled with an iron hand (beneath the velvet glove, of course), but was careful enough to retain the human response. Though she could be magnanimous, she was never maudlin.

A hero (or heroine, if you will) of many battles at home and abroad, she kept the flag of India flying, but she never crowed over her victories—she took everything in her stride. Braver than a man of her time, she retained her gentleness—as a woman, as a mother. She always remained a lady—elegant, courteous, never ignoring the basic decencies of life.

For parallels, one might go back to Elizabeth the first of England, Catherine the great of Russia and the great Empress Tzu-hsi of Manchu China. But none of them owed their power to their people, while she had been a democrat, through and through, always eager for the stamp of legitimacy even on actions that were resented by some as authoritarian.

The four ideals for which she strove all her life were—democracy, socialism, secularism and peace. Secularism was the very breath of her life. If she staked her life for secularism, it was only a measure of her faith in that ideal. Her brutal and barbaric end was also a measure of the fragility of that concept in the minds of some of us, who have obviously not yet emerged from that state of atavism. If we ever had, we might be reverting fast to a state of barbarity much worse than that of the primitive cave-dwellers. One wonders how near or how far we are to the law of the jungle—where vendetta is supreme and blood is spilled like water.

Indira Gandhi was heir to a rich tradition—of the philosophic East and the scientific West, of Gandhi's Non-violent Revolution, of Tagore's Family Man, of her father's scientific temper and a New International Order.



But she was not too much of an idealist and dreamer like her father. She had her own dreams, though, of a strong, united secular India, where religious fanaticism would be a thing of the past and social tension and economic imbalance had become unknown factors. She was certainly pragmatic enough to know the secrets of the political game. But she might not have bargained for the new barbarism, rearing its head in the name of religious fundamentalism.

If her father had striven hard to build the foundation of modern India, on sound, scientific lines, she had raised on it the complex superstructure that can stand comparison with that of any modern State in the developing world.

It was Nehru, aided by his band of pioneering scientists, led by H. J. Bhabha and S. S. Bhatnagar, who was responsible for evolving a scientific policy for the Government and promoting a scientific temper among the people. It was his daughter, who with the help of an even larger fraternity of new scientists like Vikram Sarabhai, H. D. Sethna, Raja Ramanna and M. G. K. Menon and technologists like Nayudamma, who accelerated the process of equipping the country with a network of modern laboratories, apart from creating the nuclear capability, for peaceful and constructive purposes.

From a place way down at the bottom of the ladder of the world's industrialised countries three decades ago, India had, during the prime ministership of Indira Gandhi, climbed near the top, taking the seventh place, which is a record that any major-country of the developed world could be proud of.

In agriculture, we are happily past the anxious period of grain deficits and food imports and have entered the era of growing surpluses, thanks to the Green Revolution in the South as well as in the North. There has been a distinct improvement in the levels of domestic consumption which shows that the Indian people are, by and large, better fed, better clothed, even better housed. The only snag has been the population explosion, which has repeatedly upset our five-year plans.

It was during her long stewardship, marked by firmness without fuss, that India's foreign policy acquired a new sophistication, with the emphasis on deeds rather than words, on results rather than promises and expectations. Thanks to Indira Gandhi's flair for quiet diplomacy and eagerness to get down to the brass-tacks, with *quid pro quo* arrangements wherever necessary, we now can claim to have more friends among the Third World countries, irrespective of their political complexion, than in the days of her father, whose roseate vision of the non-aligned world was



not always confirmed by the hard realities of life. Our international relations are now more solid and business-like than in the Nehru era of new evangelism and dramatic gestures, not excluding prolonged fits of "credulity and negligence."

As chairperson of the Non-aligned Movement (whose membership exceeds a hundred), Indira not only showed new qualities of resourceful leadership, but gave an economic content to what was a political initiative with a philosophic approach. The North-South dialogue and the South-South co-operation became matters of practical importance, with no time to waste on ideological preoccupations. Even the occasional exercises in shadow-boxing became a thing of the past, as was evident in the impressive Delhi meet organised under her guidance. India's immediate neighbours began to develop a healthy regard, not unmixed with an element of fear.

India, under Indira, could no longer be taken for granted because of the political weight and defence clout. She had the supreme satisfaction of leaving India a lot stronger than she had found it about two decades ago. She mastered the game of *Realpolitik*, without cynicism or crudity.

A cosmopolitan by temperament and training, Indira Gandhi was a total secularist, in thought, word and deed. She must have had anxious times with the rabid communalists and the compulsive separatists. The action on the Golden Temple was launched by her more in sorrow than in anger. The "Operation Blue Star" was a feather in her cap. Her stature rose in the eyes of all those who swore by the integrity of India and her secular commitment. But, it proved to be her crown of thorns as well.

The politics of violence and the hymns of hate, in parts of the country, strengthening the philosophy of vengeance, saddened the heart of Indira Gandhi. From the occasional disregard of personal safety and security, one might suspect a slight erosion in her will to live.

Somehow, she seemed to have had a premonition of the coming event that still casts its shadow, as she said in Orissa (on her last tour): "Every drop of my blood, I am sure, will contribute to the growth of the nation to make it strong and dynamic." We can only hope and pray, after the traumatic experience of the nation, in the shape of her supreme sacrifice, that she had not shed her blood and her life in vain. It was not for nothing that she used to play Joan of Arc in her childhood games.



In the midst of death, there is life; from the encircling gloom comes light; out of depression, there must be hope.

The manner in which Mr. Rajiv Gandhi had been asked to take over his mother's burden, along with the sorrow on her sudden demise, seems to hold out a hope for the country. He is that rare thing — a third generation Prime Minister, come to power by popular will. He is young, but his youth is not a point against him. He has faced the blow with incredible composure and restraint and borne the burden with quiet courage and confidence, tempered with wonted humility, that has won him the admiration of every one who had seen him at his mother's funeral.

All the goodwill of the world, from those at home and abroad, is with him. We can only wish him the best of luck, and say "more power to your elbow."

## The Rain and the Ocean

SUJATA PRIYAMBADA

The emerald ocean  
The upgazing tall coconut tree  
And rain

As if the white ship of clouds  
Has been anchored

It is raining  
Drip-drop, many drops  
Surf  
Voyaging over the waves

The sails of the rain  
Have been unfurled  
By the winds  
Through the coconut leaves

The ocean disappeared  
And coconut tree disappeared  
And rain disappeared

In the rain.

— Translated from Oriya by Prafulla K. Tripathy



## Religion and the Quest for Self

Dr. K. SREENIVASAN

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That religion stands out as one of the great civilising forces in human history is a truism which warrants no restatement. In the evolution of the species into a superior animal, the integrating force of religion was indeed crucial. Religion played a constructive role up to a certain point in the story of civilisation. Henceforward it began unleashing divisive and destructive elements. The crusades and other religious conflicts of the Middle Ages involved colossal waste of life and property. In modern times also religion divides people, makes them fight each other, and adds substantially to the sum total of human misery. The tragedy of our motherland, viz., its vivisection, was owing to communal frenzy and fanaticism. Even post-partition trends show that there is hardly any means to disgorge the poison which has infected the arteries of our national consciousness.

Thus, for those who think, it is an inescapable fact that religion had a positive role in the past, but its present relevance seems to be negative, because it only adds to, instead of resolving, the conflict and strife which are endemic to a technologically advanced society. There is, perhaps, another dimension to religion in modern society, which we earthlings cannot comprehend, because each one of us is committed, rather parties involved, in the phenomenon of world religions. But suppose the so-called man from Mars happens to visit our earth. He is likely to observe one strange manifestation. In most countries, he would see imposing structures of different patterns, which house neither factories nor offices nor places of entertainment. And they have no direct bearing upon the conduct of mundane existence. Inside there goes on at intervals a kind of non-utilitarian activity. Some of these buildings are properly maintained, others are in ruins. In some countries such halls are little frequented. Instead, there are open-air parades, ceremonial



singing, shouting of slogans and revolutionary catchwords. Such activities, by and large, have little connection with the endeavours of homo sapiens as producers and consumers of wealth. The man from Mars will be mystified by these goings on. If he is told that these activities represent the religious and pseudo-ideological exercises of the humans, he will be perhaps amused and puzzled. He might wonder why such waste of precious time and energy is permitted. Unfortunately we are not from Mars and hence cannot afford the luxury of such musings. Still, the fact remains that religion, from being a benevolent force in the beginning, slowly manifested its destructive potentiality, and in the modern context, tends to become a non-utilitarian ritual, which destroys social cohesion, and builds up among us explosive internal pressures. Nevertheless, religion is still, if rightly understood, a dynamic force, for good or for evil, and therefore understanding it rightly is of paramount importance to modern man.

We all know what religion is and, hence, to ask what it is redundant. Nonetheless our apprehension of it is vague and inexact. Hence to define and describe it is worthwhile as well as rewarding. Religion is a European word (See *Comparative Religion* by A. C. Bouquet, p. 15). It is a characteristically Western concept. In Latin it is *religio* and Cicero held that it came from a root "leg", meaning "to take up, gather, count or observe," that is "to observe the signs of a divine communication." Servius held that it came from another root, "lig", meaning "to bind", so that *religio* meant a relationship, that is, a communion between the human and the Superhuman. Subsequently the word came to have both the meanings. St. Augustine uses it in both senses. The earlier meaning is more appropriate, because it is the exact counterpart of a Greek word (*parateresis*) which means the scrupulous observation of omens and the performance of ritual. Most significantly the historical Jesus is reported as saying, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with parateresis", which may mean "not by looking for omens will you discern it approach" or "not by ritual observance will you bring it nearer."

All the great religions of the world originated in the East, but institutionalised religion, as we know it today, is a contribution of the West. Religion in the West is concerned with a "Religio", that is "a relationship between the human self and a non-human entity", the "sacred, the supernatural, the self-existent, the Absolute or simply God." In fact the concept of God, as we see it in Christianity or Islam, is quintessentially



a Western concoction. The idea of a personalised God, a patriarch-like figure, is a lineal descendant of the Greek God, Zeus. In Hinduism, to begin with, there was a pagan nature worship at the time of the Rigveda, which celebrated natural phenomena like the sun, wind and the rain. With the Upanishads there emerged the idea of an immanent, dynamic, all-embracing manifestation, which is the Brahman or the Unitive Creative Force. Nevertheless, the emphasis in Hindu religion continued to be on the good life. How to organise it became the paramount concern of the Law-givers. For example, Manu propounded the Varnashrama Dharma, a systematically worked-out dispensation meant to perpetuate Brahminical domination. Here the real intention is to devise a social pattern, but purposely it is made out as a divinely ordained system. *Bhagavad Gita* helped to buttress such a social order and also advocated a Karmamarga, or Path of Action, revealed, inviolable and permanent. This ingeniously imposed tyranny of the Priestly Order, based on Sruti (Revelation) and Smriti (Inherited tradition) was challenged by Lord Buddha. He advocated the Eight-fold Path, a way of life quite different from the one propped up by the priestly class.

Confucianism and Taoism of China are also means to the good life. Thus, it is quite evident that from Suez eastward, religion has been, by and large, a way of life. The Pharisees, it was said, had the *hodos* or Way. Early Christianity in the Book of Acts, is "that way," Japanese religion is called *shinto*, meaning the "way of the Gods." In Islam also, secular aspects like economic justice, brotherhood and charity take precedence over relationship with God. But in Christianity, though born east of Suez, owing to the permeation of European traditions, viz., Greek thought and the centripetal and heirarchical structure of the Roman Empire with the Caesar at the top, there surfaced a marked tendency to make religion primarily a relationship between the individual and his Maker. There was also consequently an ingenious demarcation between Temporal and Spiritual authority. Thus, on closer analysis, we see that Western religion has managed to avoid conflict between a man's private and public self. But this had a deleterious effect too : religion got divorced from secular existence; both were put in water-tight compartments. In the West, the dichotomy became so complete that we find today the strange spectacle of Christianity and Communism in one and the same individual.

This kind of mutually repugnant combination manifested in Europe because religion got divorced from reason; its one and



only basis was faith. Many of the fundamental tenets of Christianity, including that about God, were above questioning. Original Sin, transubstantiation, Papal Infallibility, etc., are matters of implicit belief to the faithful. So much so, the mind, with its freedom to choose, was least operative in religious matters. Doctrines and dogmas were handed down; the faithful have to accept them *in toto*. In other words, religion became, as originally meant by the word, the performance of rituals. This made it possible for a man to "have a religion" without "being religious." As long as one practised the rituals and observances prescribed by religion, he has a religion, even though he does not subscribe to the true religious spirit nor imbibe the values which go with them. Western religion was handicapped by this split-personality. As materialism made gross inroads, we witnessed there the strange spectacle of having God, liturgy and the Church, but with declining spiritual overtones. Indeed, in certain parts of Europe, they have secularised the religious paraphernalia, to evolve a substitute religion of Communism, with a pantheon, priesthood and appropriate rituals. Herein is the genesis of the deep crisis, which the West now suffers from. There is a clear breakdown of spiritual values. In the engulfing darkness, they grope for a way out. And many among them look to the East, especially to India, for light and illumination.

Thus, in the West, religion and ideology have converged towards the same point in a no man's land of spiritual paralysis. The function of true religion is to integrate, to bring minds together and thereby evolve harmony out of the discordant notes struck by individual egos. What occasions this meeting of minds? Only through a process of outgoing, that is, by breaking loose from one's individual shells so that understanding and spiritual comradeship between man and man are possible. In fact the self, by discovering itself, must become aware of its oneness with the Universal Self, and discern the non-dual or Advaitic oneness which keeps in motion this vast cosmos with its multitudinous manifestations of life. That is, where the Quest for Self looms large and bright as the basic need of modern times. A true religious revival can occur only through such a quest, which focuses the Unity of all Life and causes the realisation that everything is animated by Brahman, which we may even call a Directive Mind.

Christ had warned that the Kingdom of God cannot be won through ritual. According to him, it is "already realised in your midst" or it is "realised inwardly, and not by outward ceremonies." Is he not categorical here about the role of the Self, the prescient Mind, which is the dynamo of all human actions? If so,



It relates him to Indian philosophical thought. Of course, his Church, owing to history and tradition, underwent distortions, in its institutionalised form. Nevertheless, he was a humanist who had believed that Heaven and Hell are within us and are ordained by what we make of ourselves. It is the Self which makes or mars us. Christ was one who was fascinated by the ascetic ideal of life. It is a path in which contemplation and introspection are of great significance. The charting of the psyche is quite relevant. Christ was a true Jnanayogi—one who subdued Self through wisdom. He was like one of the great Rishis of ancient India.

It is edifying to muse about these inimitable seekers of Truth. They were our Path-finders, the architects of our spiritual and secular way of life. Many among them happened to live in India and they did expound philosophical systems which are astonishingly fresh even today. Out of these was unfolded a way of life which sustained our nation for the past several millennia. To the Indian, no matter to whichever faith he belongs, life is a pilgrimage, a progressive gravitation towards the Perfect, which is the ultimate stage of Moksha or Nirvana. To attain this stage, there are three means—*Bhakti* or devotion, *Karma* or action and *Jnana* or wisdom. The Purusharthas—Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha—are the desiderata of existence. The Ashrama Dharma is the means to this material and spiritual transmutation.

This is an integrated view of life. The metaphysical concept which informs it is Advaita or the Principle of Oneness. Its greatest and most systematic exponent was Sri Sankara. The simple basis of this philosophy is non-dualism. The Self or Atman is a microscopic part of an Omnipotent Self, which is a World Soul or an Over Soul. It is Paramatma, God or Brahman. And each man in whichever way he opts, through *Bhakti* or *Karma* or *Jnana*, engages himself in a Quest for Self, probes the depths of his soul, and slowly by the conscientious performance of his chosen duties—Brahmacharya, Garhastya, Vanaprastha, Sanyasa—the four Ashramas—cherishes and cultivates his own soul and strives to enlarge it assiduously so that ultimately it is close to the Universal Soul. Thus, he tends to achieve Moksha or the final release from Samsara or the coil of this earthly existence. In this eternal Quest for Self by men, temples, rituals, and even God are not absolutely conditional. Sans even these, says Hindu philosophy, one can hope to achieve the transcendental bliss of Moksha. An atheist too is not denied this opportunity. The Charvakas, or non-believers of God, were also the Rishis of the Hindu pantheon. The following stanza from Sri Sankara shows how unorthodox were his views about God and religion:



O Lord, pardon my three sins:  
 I have in contemplation clothed in form  
 Thee who art formless:  
 I have in praise described  
 Thee who art ineffable:  
 And in visiting temples I have ignored  
 Thine omnipotence.

The sheet anchor of this philosophy is the quest for self. Sri Sankara systematised it as Advaita or Monism. Life's ultimate goal is to realise its non-dualness. Adi Sankara's philosophical speculations stopped short of its social implications and survived as an idealistic concept. Another Keralite, Sree Narayana Guru galvanised it, into a dynamic Thought. His distinction is its application to social change. While Sri Sankara perfected the speculative element in the metaphysical concept of Advaita, Sree Narayana sought to wield it as the engine of social transformation. With its help, he meant to forge a social order based on non-Self, that is, on genuine altruism and self-abnegation, the right royal road to Love, which unites all. In this stress-inflicted, conflict-ridden world, he sought to re-establish harmony through Love, by a quiescent acceptance of the Oneness of Phenomena — One God, One Religion, One Caste. To him, as to the great founders of world religions, Love is all, God is Truth, and man is the measure of everything. His is the humanistic ideal *par excellence*, which blends the essence of all religions and faiths. It also encompasses the ideals of equality, justice and freedom, which the secular philosophers have espoused. The panacea to cure all the ills of humanity today is to transcend Self. How can we achieve it unless we know Self? And a quest for Self is the starting point of selflessness, love, freedom, the final release of the soul from its bondage, and the attainment of Moksha or Nirvana, which is existence sans desire and sorrow.

Sree Narayana Guru's philosophical poem, *One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction*, is a quintessential abstract of Upanishadic philosophy. In a lucid and simple way, he unravels the essence of the Indian world view. Two stanzas of this seminal work are worth-quoting. The first is a warning and a proscription against too much indulgence in Self —

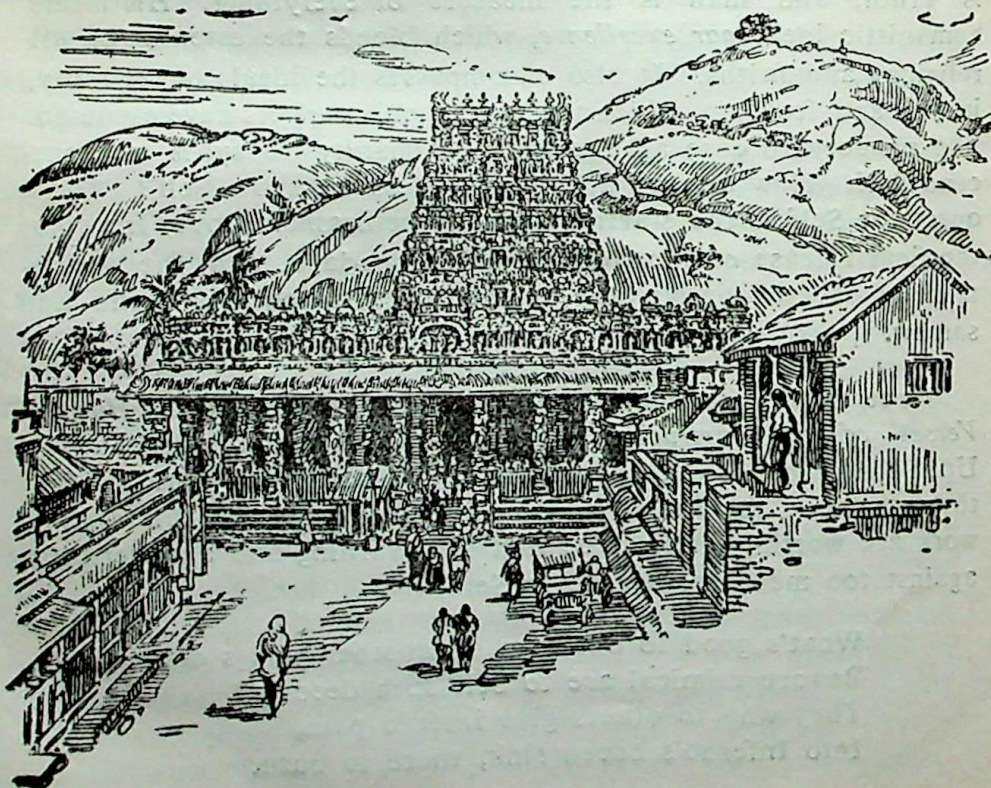
What's good to one, and to another brings distress,  
 Beware inimical are to Self such deeds;  
 They who to others give intense pain,  
 Into Inferno's ocean sink, there to burn.



The other strikes a positive note and thus balances by contrast the negation of the former. It is a persuasive assertion of the Oneness of Life. Further it is a clarion call to right action and conduct.

What we here know as this man or that,  
On reflection, is Self's prime cosmic form ;  
And that which each does for self-happiness  
Should also subserve others' happiness.

This is the true spirit animating all religions, the role of the Good Samaritan, which alone is the road to the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. And only through the quest for self can one imbibe this all-embracing power of love.





## THE VISION OF THE SACRED DANCE - III

(Tiru - k - kuuttu - t - taricanam )

From Tirumular's Tirumantiram

Translated from the original in Tamll by

K. C. KAMALAI AH

(Continued from the last number)

Gods of the Universe and those beyond,  
Gods on earth enclrcled by waves clear,  
Seeing the dance of the Sacred Feet in the Hall of Gold,  
They worship and attain salvation. (56)

As to those whose mouths water at the sight of tamarind,  
To all those who witness the enervating dance,  
Tears of delight swell, the heart is in a trance.  
In the aureole of light, nectar of delight springs in mind. (57)

The wandering hand stretched across is Siva Ananda.  
The sacred dance danced in the acclaimed stage  
Is food for those who eat it and are mad of it.  
The gain to those who have the vision is that of the  
listeners too. (58)

With the fire and the drum, Rudraksha garland and noose  
With Ankusam and trident and skull and wisdom,  
Subsisting in the blue throat striking terror,  
With the Girl in teens on one side, the Lord executes  
a mighty dance. (59)

With the eleven kinds of dances seeking refuge  
In the ankleted foot, the hand having the drum  
And the lengthening rhythm, danced Nandi with love,  
The Supreme Being inside and outside. (60)

The Nine dancing as also the Sixteen,  
The denominations Six of good dancing,  
The pleasant Seven dancing as also Seven and Fifty-six,  
He danced lovingly, the Dance of Delight eternal. (61)



Sevens of the Seven He is, as also the basic seven letters,  
 One of the Seven He percolates and unites,  
 Of the seven paths, Our Supreme Luminous Lord is the  
 Path of Truth.

He is One with the Dance of Seven musical notes. (62)

The three expanding into five and three hundred and sixty,  
 The three expanding into six and the twelve basics,  
 Culminating in the soul of the three,  
 The Lord danced the attractive dance. (63)

The Sacred Feet of the Lord rest on the heads of gods,  
 The Flowery Feet of the Lord, the brightest ruby,  
 Shine resplendent in the hearts of the faithful.  
 The transcendent Lord is the celestial tree and  
 unfailing treasure. (64)

With the Omniscient dancing, the worlds tremble  
 and shake.

The Lord dances knowing the limits of our hearts.  
 With the Omniscient dancing, the many elements are  
 on the move,

Deriving pleasure from the dance of the Holy Flame. (65)

The Lord danced as anybody else, say those with  
 little knowledge.

The first act of dance none could comprehend.  
 After every one came to know the original dance danced,  
 The Dance of Origin is but the Love of Grace. (66)

While the nine and nine of the two words  
 Are held together lovingly at the end by 'aci',  
 With the activating energy appearing and dancing,  
 My Loving Father takes to dancing. (67)

The scriptural essence dancing and Sadasivam too dancing,  
 The mind dancing and dancing too the energy of Siva,  
 The still and the unstill dancing along with sacred lore,  
 The Heavenly Father danced the Dance of Bliss. (68)

For the two to witness at the lovely stage,  
 He with a Form, Formless and the Form-cum-formless,  
 Within the divine Love of Grace, the Siddha, the Blissful,  
 As the very Grace personified commenced dancing. (69)

While Siva dances, Sakti dances too. While in the universe,  
 Evil is shaken to its roots, the unshakable ether shakes.  
 While the ever-fresh philosophy of the Essence of  
 Rhythm dances,

Within the periphery of Vedanta-Siddhanta Siva dances. (70)



The finale to rhythm and the peak of four pronged  
 knowledge,  
 The ultimate goal of the Vedas and the impeccable Siva  
 Ananda,

In the good and eternal Siva Ananda without roots,  
 Are rhythm personified. That is the Dance of Siva. (71)

Releasing the toil of the five beginning with Sivam,  
 Life and bondage detaching themselves from that of  
 penance,

The Supreme Lord dancing of His own will,  
 That's the Siva Ananda Dance of Wisdom—the Penance. (72)

The Perennial Lord engulfs, Since the dim past He  
 perennially stands,  
 While gods perish. The Lord perennially stands  
 While being searched by the name of 'Vikirtan.'

While the three lights waver,  
 He stands for ever. How he has made a thrall of me! (73)

The Lord transcending primordial sound,  
 Stands entwined appearing not different,  
 From the Faithful in the know of separation and  
 elimination,

Who derived immense pleasure of Siva consciousness. (74)

'Tis Bliss, 'Tis Bliss, say the ignorant.  
 To none is intelligible the lofty dance of delight.  
 To whomsoever is intelligible the lofty dance of delight,  
 'Tis Bliss, the very end of self-effacement. (75)

The well-formed hand is thrown across.  
 The tender hand invites and offers refuge to ascetics.  
 The lovely hand keeps eternal vigil.  
 The fire is purificatory. That's the Lord, the  
 Sacred Still. (76)

Holding a drum in a hand and throwing one across  
 Having water and also a hand with fire,  
 And the Lotus Foot trampling evil,  
 That is SI VA YA NA MA in shape, chantest thou so. (77)

Haran's drum is creation, Fear Not hand is protection.  
 If it needs any telling, in the fire is destruction.  
 In Haran's embrace settles illusion.  
 Haran's Foot is Grace in perpetuation. (78)

A Blaze of Light, the Guiding Light, the Inner Light—  
 She of handsome eyes had a vision of Him such as these.  
 With the sight of three Supreme Gods merging in him,  
 She broke into singing songs of His glory. (79)



What say we about Nandi, the Presiding Deity of  
Wisdom, My Father!

Pierced into the Mantras, crossing further,  
Beyond the hanging sky still farther,  
The Supreme Eternal Handsome Dancer! (80)

None comprehends the Leonine Form on the Sacred  
Stage

Of the lofty Teacher Nandi.  
The red and white noticed in fire  
Is the Form in which one can take refuge. (81)

The Invincible Sakti is the Willpower of the  
Invincible Lord,  
Goading Him and the Souls into action,  
Instilling in the latter a sense of discrimination.  
That is the agent provocateur, guide and instrument  
of love  
Leading the Souls unto the Feet of Haran. (82)

### Notes

- (61) The Nine: Sivam, Sakti, Vindu, Sadasivam, Isvaran, Rudra, Vishnu and Brahma.
- The Sixteen: The eight directions and the eight forms of Siva.
- The Six: The six denominations of Satvam, Vaishnavam, Saktam, Ganapatyam, Kaumaram and Sauram.
- The Seven: Seven worlds. The Fifty-six: 56 kingdoms of ancient India.
- (62) The Seven melodies (Pans) are: Kural, Tuttam, Kaikkilal, Vilarl, Taram, Ulal and Ill.
- (64) The Heavenly Tree called 'Kalpakam' bestows what is asked for and the Heavenly Treasure called 'Chintamani' endows one with what is even thought of.
- (67) The two words are *Tat* and *Tvam* lovingly held together by 'Aci' as *Tatvamaci*.  
The Nine and Nine refer to the Supreme and the Soul.
- (73) Vikirtan: He who is not made, existing neither with a beginning nor with an end.  
The three lights are the Sun, the Moon and the Fire.



## Nehru's Philosophy of Literature

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Much has been written, and more will be written, indeed much more can be written on Nehru who was a multi-splendoured personality: a man of many moods and memories, controversies and contradictions, contrasts and even contrary qualities. He has been deservedly depicted and dealt with as a freedom-fighter, political leader, politician, statesman, democrat, angry aristocrat, writer, thinker, philosopher, artist in public life, revolutionary, liberator of humanity, king with the common touch, historian, maker of history, nation-builder, architect of modern India, man of peace, originator of the Non-Aligned Movement, enunciator of the Panch-sila or the Five Principles of Political Conduct, sceptic, socialist, secularist, humanist, nationalist, internationalist, etc.

But as far as I know, no one, if at all any, has systematically attempted to analyse and examine Nehru's philosophy of literature, in the true and technical sense of the term. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that I should do on Nehru's Philosophy of Literature.

There is a close kinship, an intimate relationship between literature and philosophy, language and meaning, *vakya* and *artha*. Literature without philosophy is meaningless; philosophy without literature is feelingless. It is not for nothing that Shakespeare writes in Hamlet: "Words without thoughts never to heaven go." Literature is nearest to its divine origin, when it administers the comforts and breathes the thoughts of philosophy.

Philosophy is the study of man in relation to his wordless experience, his quest of truth and conquest of falsehood. Literature too is the study of man in relation to his artistic expression, his inspired language, his immortality of speech. Thus conceived, philosophy is very near and dear to literature which is life come to



utterance. Philosophy is the highest experience of which literature is the finest expression.

When individual—out of his joy and sorrow, hope and despair, cheer and tear—attempts to create various forms of literature, he will have to face philosophical problems of wisdom and folly, beauty and ugliness, love and hate, life and death. The study of philosophy is of immense importance in the solution of these perennial problems. I, therefore, cannot help saying that philosophy and literature are closely connected with and mutually helpful to each other.

What is philosophy of literature? Without knowing what philosophy of literature is, we can neither understand nor appreciate Nehru's philosophy of literature. Hence the first question arises: What is philosophy of literature? First question must come first.

Philosophy of literature is the latest branch of literature. It is being studied, especially in American universities, in the department of philosophy and those of literature.

To my mind, philosophy or literature is an analysis and interpretation of literature from deeper and higher, reflective and comprehensive point of view. It is literature come to an understanding of itself. If philosophy of literature is to become creative, it must render itself as rich and varied as life itself is.

Nehru has not only created literature but also philosophized it. As a result, he has developed his own philosophy of literature. Nehru's philosophy of literature is a conceptual analysis of literature. It is his reflective explanation of literary concepts. Concept of literature, like life itself, is a slow growth. When concept is subtle, growth is slow.

*As a man:* If we want to know Nehru's philosophy of literature, we must also understand him as a man. The kind of literature that a man chooses to create depends upon the kind of man that he is. As the man, so would be his philosophy of literature. As a matter of fact, the man, his thought and its expression go together.

Let us, then, find out what kind of a man Nehru was. As a man Nehru combined a fine sensibility of mind, a rare delicacy of feeling with large, generous impulses. To the weak and frustrated, his heart went out in profound sympathy. Dr. Radhakrishnan, who was Nehru's great contemporary, says: "As a man, Nehru is sensitive, gentle and kind." Nehru was a vibrant personality, a great character, beautiful, sorrowful, generous and free. All this clearly shows that he was a man of many moods,



delicate feelings, intense emotions and sublime sentiments. Nehru was human, much too human; and he always preferred to be human. To be human is to be trusting, to be kind, to be co-operative, to be sympathetic and responsive.

#### As a Litterateur

Nehru was a creative writer and not a Professor of Literature in a college, institute or university. This is exactly why he did not write any book on "Principles of Literary Criticism" in order to propound his "philosophy of literature." We have come to know Nehru's views on literature through his seminal and celebrated works—*Glimpses of World History* (1934), *An Autobiography* (1936), *The Discovery of India* (1946), *Last Will and Testament* (1954), *A Bunch of Old Letters* (1958), *Occasional Speeches and Writings* (1954-64), etc. In and through them he has not only discovered old facts of life buried under the debris of the past but also re-created new thoughts to act in the living present. A litterateur is a recreator of the future and not a repeater of the past like a parrot.

No estimate of Nehru's philosophy of literature will be complete without an assessment of him as a litterateur. Literature is reflection on life and its problems through effulgent words. And a philosopher of literature is one who has deeply pondered over the meaning of existence and expressed it exquisitely. In this sense, Nehru is a philosopher of literature, as well as a litterateur.

Many Indians have won unstinted praise at the hands of western litterateurs for their conspicuous ability to speak and write the Queen's English. Jawaharlal is one more of that select band who mastered a foreign language and made their inmost thoughts known to the world in a manner worthy of the great ones of English literature.

*Nehru's letters from a father to his daughter*, which were originally addressed by him from prison to his dear daughter Indira and enlarged later into his *Glimpses of World History* meant for all children, appeals also to adults in equal degree. In a letter to the author on the publication of its first edition in English, Roger Baldwin says: "A very magnificent affair from the point of view of book production and an equally magnificent affair from the point of view of scholarly research and arresting presentation."

Equal concern with the individual and the world, and the power of fusing the personal with the universal are evident also in Jawaharlal's last great book, *The Discovery of India*. The work is, in fact, as much a discovery of Nehru as a discovery of India. There is, of course, no contradiction between the two. The life



of every individual is a focus in which the life of the entire universe is seen. In the case of an ordinary man, this perception is unconscious and blind. With an artist, the perception is a conscious endeavour that gives meaning and purpose to all his work. T. S. Eliot has pointed out that any genuine work of art is not only influenced by all previous works of art, but in its own turn modifies them. Perception of a new work of art alters our appreciation of all previous works of art. Nehru's *The Discovery of India*, therefore, discovers at the same time the fascinating world of experience that is Nehru.

It is, however, Jawaharlal's *An Autobiography*, which is his *magnum opus*, that marks Nehru's highest achievement in the world of letters. At once lyrical and epic, it displays his manifold qualities as man and writer who is an artist of words. The story of his own life is fused in the story of the nation and its struggle for freedom and fraternity. The poignancy of the birth pangs of a nation is matched by the poignancy of personal sorrow that broods over the pages. This is why Aldous Huxley, while commenting on Nehru's *An Autobiography*, wrote: "For those who would understand contemporary India, it is an indispensable book." Nehru's *An Autobiography* is the biography of modern India and Indians about whom he wrote in his *Last Will and Testament*: "If any people choose to think of me, then I should like them to say: This was the man who with all his mind and heart, loved India and the Indian people. And they, in turn, were indulgent to him and gave him of their love most abundantly and extravagantly."

All this vivid delineation, as depicted and described in his piece of work is Nehru the man! How noble in reason; how infinite in faculty; in form and moving; how expressive and admirable is he as a litterateur! How profound and prophetic is "Nehru's philosophy of literature!"

#### A Queer Combination

After a concise but critical, short but systematic analysis and examination of Nehru's "Philosophy of Literature," I feel convinced that he was neither a mere philosopher nor a sheer litterateur but somehow a queer combination of the two. Nehru was, indeed, a philosopher of literature which is criticism of life aesthetic.

Life, especially life of feeling, is the centre round which all literary activities revolve. It is the conviction and conclusion of Nehru that literature becomes effective only when it reflects the hard facts of life and living. When literature deviates from depicting life realities, it ceases to be effective and becomes defective. Literature is not fictitious but fanciful. It is



not make-believe but real expression of life's duals and dualities in and through ornamental language, inspired words, images, imageries, similes, metaphors, myths, symbols, poems, parables and paradoxes.

Nehru's philosophy of literature is essentially realistic without ceasing to be idealistic. It is a creative fusion of truth and beauty, real and ideal. His conception of literature is democratic rather than aristocratic. It aims at mass-appeal and not class-consciousness. Like Gandhi, Nehru wanted art and literature that could speak to the millions.

The beauty, sweetness and sublimity of "Nehru's philosophy of literature" is that he does not recognize a barrier between thought and expression. For him, to think is to feel and to feel is to act in words or deeds. With the philosopher of literature, as conceived by Nehru, experience and expression go very well together.

The quality of a litterateur is ultimately the quality of the man. Nehru was a fine fusion of a man, woman and child. He had intellectual understanding of a man, emotional sensibility of a woman and perpetual wonder of a child. As a result Nehru's literature did not degenerate into a "ballad of bloodless categories" but has become fused with feeling and welded with willing, which is a preface and prelude to action.

Nehru was an integrated thinker and his "philosophy of literature" is an integration of cognition, affection and conation; a creative synthesis of thinking, feeling and willing.

Now Nehru is in eternal sleep that knows no waking. But India of his dreams is wide-awake. To the people of India and the world, we "have promises to keep and miles to go" before we sleep. This is how Robert Frost did poetize and Nehru attempted to actualize it. Dream and deed, poetry and politics complement each other. With this end in view, Nehru's unfinished task is being carried forward without any haste and without any rest by his friends and followers. As a consecrated consequence, the nation is well on the way to establish itself as a progressive leader of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) holding aloft the banner of sky kissing ideals for the realization of which Nehru thought profoundly, felt intensely, wrote extensively, worked ceaselessly, lived in earnestness and died in harness.

Nehru's literary achievements are of the kind that do not vanish on the wings of time. He has built for himself an imperishable monument of literature, and his name will be remembered for ever as an immortal litterateur whose "philosophy of literature" is a model and despair to all literary writers of our times.



## D. H. LAWRENCE AND YOGA

Dr. BARWATHA REGINA PAPA

D. H. Lawrence is one of those writers whose works unfold a vision which is exclusively personal, unsanctioned by convention or popular assent. The system of thought, of which he is the sole founder with no worthy second so far, is often commented on for its exotic non-conformity and peculiar strangeness. R. P. Blackmur calls it a new psychology come from nowhere or from the ear of Zeus.<sup>1</sup> Dians Trilling remarks that it has its source and fulfilment only in phantasy.<sup>2</sup> Its incompatibility with British orthodoxy exiled Lawrence from the country of his birth on a savage pilgrimage around the world. Among his works, *The Rainbow* (Methuen, 1915) was suppressed, and Lawrence could not find a publisher for *Women in Love* (New York, 1920). His last novel *Lady Chatterey's Lover* (Orioli, Florence, 1928) was banned and his paintings were confiscated in 1929. It is because Lawrence tried to build a system outside the pale of Western thought turning a premental and spontaneous sex into a psychobio-spiritual experience.

A basic religious instinct and a prodding Messianic impulse to destroy the old and create the new, prompted Lawrence to devise a new religion, a religion of blood:

"My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says is always true".<sup>3</sup>

This peculiar faith of Lawrence bringing together "blood" and "religion" is an endeavour to create a sort of theology out of biology. Lawrence has given to his thesis a scienticised religio-philosophic exposition in his theoretical treatises *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (1921) and *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922) and has fictionalised it particularly in the novels written after *Sons and Lovers*. But Lawrence's scientific statements are too unscientific to be tested and proved. His



religion is unconventionally atheistic and his philosophy strangely uninstitutionalised. On the whole, he creates a personal myth, a subjective science.

Lawrence includes Yoga among the sources that he acknowledges as providing him with "hints" and 'suggestions' for this subjective science:

"...I have found hints, suggestions for what I say here in all kinds of scholarly books, from the Yoga and Plato and St. John the Evangel and the early Greek philosophers like Herakleites down to Frazer and his 'golden bough', and even Freud and Frobenius".<sup>4</sup>

In the absence of sufficient evidences, the precedence given to Yoga may be regarded only as chronological, as from Yoga to St. John, and from the Greeks to Freud. But one can also conclude the inclusion of Yoga, as Lawrence's admission of his knowledge of Yoga, however vague that knowledge might be. Emile Delavenay points out that Lawrence omits the origins of his sources with a "studied negligence" and among the neglected origins are numbered Helen Blavatsky, James M. Pryse and Edward Carpenter,<sup>5</sup> all three associated with the Theosophical Society in India, a society devoted to the Hindu religious revival and Yogic tradition. Lawrence himself mocks at theosophy as "Besantheism." There is a strong possibility of Lawrence having received his knowledge of Yoga through his reading of these authors.

Lawrence's contact with Edward Carpenter's written and spoken words is corroborated by Jessie Chambers. Jessie, who was Lawrence's first love, assured Emile Delavenay in 1935 that "their mutual friend" Alice Dax, the wife of an Eastwood pharmacist, owned most of Carpenter's works. Jessie was sure that Lawrence had read all the books on Mrs. Dax's shelves, he being a frequent visitor to Daxes' house at Eastwood and later at Shirebrook. If so, Lawrence had heard about Yoga even in his youth.<sup>6</sup>

All that Lawrence knew about India and its thought were what he might have gathered through his friends and readings. Among his friends in close ranks are the Brewsters who had a passion for Buddhism and had stayed in Ceylon and India and loved these countries. Earl H. Brewster recollects that Lawrence had talked to him about the "centre between the eyebrows." Lawrence had told him:

"You don't look the intellectual type. You were not meant to be governed by the *centre between eyebrows*. We should



not pass beyond suffering. .... Look deep into the centre to your solar plexus".<sup>7</sup>

Belittling the centre between eyebrows as the seat of cerebral consciousness and exhorting Brewster to look to the godhead in the Solar plexus is characteristic of Lawrence. Commenting on this, Brewster later writes: "Vaguely, I knew of the Hindu theory of the *Chakras*, but years passed before I felt the significance of what he said to me then".<sup>8</sup> Lawrence himself uses the word "Chakra" and "Centre" indiscriminately:

"... Having begun to explore the unconscious, we find we must go from centre to centre, Chakra to Chakra, to use an old esoteric world".<sup>9</sup>

What might be inferred from these is that Lawrence had in his mind the Yogic Chakras whenever he mentioned polar centres in human body, though his knowledge of the Yoga might be incomplete and imperfect.

Among Lawrence's Indian friends are one Suhravardy whom Lawrence selected as one of the chosen few friends to go along with him to found the ideal Utopian community, the Rananim.<sup>10</sup> Boshi, who talked to him at length on the Sanskrit meaning of "the one-O words"<sup>11</sup> "Om", the holiest sound which is the origin of the Universe itself, and Dr. Feroz, a Parsee, in whose big empty room, Lawrence had danced with his friends till "we were staggered and quite dazed".<sup>12</sup> But the identity of these Indian friends and how they came to befriend Lawrence, and the extent of their influence on him, are still a mystery.

If in future these questions might be answered with ample scholarly evidences, an Indian scholar may have much to say about India's vital influence on Lawrence. Meanwhile, we may wonder why Lawrence avoided visiting India when he toured its neighbouring country Ceylon. This avoidance according to Middleton Murry was not accidental but purposeful. Middleton Murry comments on this in a leading article "Lemonade in the Adelphi":

...It is worth musing on the fact (for it is not accidental) that Mr. Forster has written his novel about India, the one continent from which Mr. Lawrence shrank away on his journey round the world. Mr. Lawrence was driven by a positive urge, he was seeking a racial consciousness in which his own could find rest. He sniffed India from Ceylon and went on to Australia. ... For him India might have been really overpowering and he did not want to be overpowered, but to be renewed ...<sup>13</sup>



If Lawrence purposefully avoided visiting India, it was due to his fear of being overpowered. It is quite characteristic of Lawrence that he always feared the thing to which he was attracted. One has only to remember his love for England and for his mother and yet his desire to flee from both. Besides doesn't this reflect a conflict between Lawrence the mystic and Lawrence the Englishman?

While Lawrence the Englishman with his British racial superiority, characteristic of his time, feared being overpowered by India, Lawrence the religious man might have been vitally influenced by a spiritual consciousness in the Indian thought-stream and adopted it as the basic frame for his philosophy which eventually turned out to be unorthodox and exotically queer in the Western context.

### Notes

- 1 R. P. Blackmur, "Prefatory Note": *Eleven Essays in the European Novel* (1943, rpt. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc.). P. vii.
- 2 Diana Trilling, "A Letter of Introduction to Lawrence": *A. D. H. Lawrence Miscellany*, ed. Harry T. Moore (London: Heinemann, 1961), p. 127.
- 3 Lawrence's letter to Ernest Collins, 17 Jan. 1913: *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Aldous Huxley (4th ed. 1932; rpt. London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1956), p. 94.
- 4 *FUPU*, p. 6.
- 5 Emile Delavenay, "Introduction" to *D. H. Lawrence and Edward Carpenter: A Study in Edwardian Transition* (London: Heinemann, 1971), p. 2.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- 7 Earl Brewster and Achsah: *D. H. Lawrence; Reminiscence and Correspondence* (London: Martin Secker, 1934), p. 18.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- 9 *FUPU*, p. 233.
- 10 Anthony West, *D. H. Lawrence* (London: Arthur Baker Limited, 1950), p. 44.
- 11 *LH*, p. 744
- 12 Letter to Katherine Mansfield, 27 Dec. 1916. *LH* P. 464.
- 13 Middleton Murry, *Reminiscences of Lawrence* (New York) Dodge Publishing Company, 1938), Pp. 254-55.



## **"Tintern Abbey" and "Ode on Immortality"** **In the Light of Samkhya Dialectic**

**P. LAXMI NARAIN**

Wordsworth's entire poetics is a mighty emotional outflow a sensuous effusion — a mystic incantation on the beauty and sublimity of nature. Particularly his early and youthful poetry is almost a feasting on external manifestations. It is a period of sense-celebration. The poet surrenders wholly to sound and is deeply overpowered by the spell of colour.

There is hardly a hint on articulation about the indwelling spirit. Nevertheless an aimless groping starts to identify it. Thus it is a total exposure to the frontal thrust of exterior beauty and enchantment. But as years pass by this emotional exuberance and poetic profusion mellows slowly into a serene spiritual maturity.

The poet outgrows his obsession with sense-perceptions and starts experiencing the limitless immensity of spirit and its intimations and subsequently achieves a harmonious integration between these two polarities. This dualism or dialectic bears a close correspondence to Indian Samkhya system of *Prakriti* and *Purusha*.

*Prakriti* is the evolving phenomenon limited by time and space while *Purusha* is the noumena of pure consciousness defying all causation.

*Tintern Abbey* and *Ode on Immortality* mark a definite departure towards a higher gradation. These two poems perhaps stand out as definite achievements in evolution and enlargement of poet's vision. A serious and sincere exploration starts to apprehend the presiding power behind the facade of world process!



A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.

However we cannot totally rule out the poet's precise reference to an innate spirit in his early poems. But in spite of an immature infatuation with sense-pleasures, there lurks a deep and unconscious urge to go beyond colour and sound. There is a feverish search for a totality. He fumbles for a fullness of experience and existence. A sense of insufficiency flows in and through the lines of those poems. There is a vague longing for a supra-sensuous experience. Its feeble rumblings are heard here and there. But *Tintern Abbey* and *The Ode* bring into a sharp focus the poet's priorities and perspective. He matures into wide sympathies and is further metamorphosed from a passionate poet into a profound seer. The shift is from sense-gratification to spiritual illumination:

For I have learned  
To look on nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing often times  
The still, sad music of humanity.

For Wordsworth nature is no more a treasure-house of sense-pleasures but on the contrary it is too deep for tears and conveys human suffering.

The poet experiences a flowering of new awareness. He comprehends a deeper turbulence beneath the sights and sounds of nature and perceives a pervasive principle in the process and flow of life. Now there is a deeper inspiration in the sleep of hills; a different intimation in the silence of the sky. A new message from the mountain springs and their haunting murmurs. Wordsworth's poetry is a cyclic movement caught between process and reality. They establish a philosophical equivalence between *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. He finds no contradiction in their mutual interaction. They compliment each other for an eternal flow and progression of the universe.

Nature with all its beauty and variety is not self-sufficient; it has to evolve to merge with the ultimate reality. The mighty pattern of *Prakriti* includes the ebb and flow of world-process. It is the prime-mover behind the inexorable drama of creation and dissolution.

"The *Prakriti* creates and evolves only for the *Purusha*. When the *Purusha* comes to know it, the *Prakriti* vanishes. In this way it is better to rename *Prakriti* as ignorance or absence of knowledge. It cannot be absolute and independent",<sup>1</sup>



The whole world is a *Parinaama* or transformation of Prakriti. It is subtle and invisible caught in the flux and mutation of existence.

"... Prakriti ..... It is called Jada ; in the form of unlimited but always an active force it is called 'Sakti' while in the form of the unmanifested objects it is called 'Avyakta' or unexpressed".<sup>2</sup>

Prakriti represents a process and potentiality. Distortion and disturbance constitute its inner propelling. It includes human "Gunas", as vagaries and variations.

Purusha is the unchanging reality or the eternal existence, the ideal and the ultimate destiny of Prakriti. The cosmic Purusha is the eternal witness extending far beyond the bounds of the universe. *Purushasukta* says :

"Thousand-headed was the Purusha, thousand-eyed, and thousand-legged. He, covering the earth on all sides, stretched himself beyond it by ten fingers length. All this Purusha along, whatever was and whatever shall be ... one-fourth of Him. All beings are (but) three-fourths of Him in immortal in the highest heaven".<sup>3</sup> (*Rigveda*, X, 90)

The process and reality constitute the two major strands in the poetic design of Wordsworth. Coexistence of these contraries imparts structural symmetry and conceptual harmony to Wordsworth's poetry.

*Tintern Abbey* clearly reveals this dichotomy time and again. The whole poem thrives on a harmonious opposition of this physical and metaphysical principles. Thus sense and spirit are Prakriti and Purusha equivalents.

*The Ode on Immortality* begins with a sad brooding on the poet's sudden depletion of emotional inspiration :

Whither is fled the visionary gleam?

Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

This poem is a clear pointer towards the poet's changed perspective. He searches for the very roots of existence and finds out the essential divinity of man :

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:

The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,

Hath had elsewhere its setting

And cometh from afar;

Not in entire forgetfulness

And not in utter nakedness

But trailing clouds of glory do we come

from God, who is our home:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy!



The Ode is an open confession of the poet's creative crisis. It gives us a glimpse into his inner turmoil. He delinks himself from his former self. The previous emotional pull gives way to an expansion of consciousness.

His growth does not totally dismiss the validity of sense-experience. But he treats it as a gradation in the upward advancement. In fact, sense and spirit are two different dimensions of totality.

Wordsworth's concept of pre-natal existence is nothing but man's unlimited absolute state of existence in its Purusha state

The process of life with all its inner conflicts and contradictions is contained in provisional and limited Prakriti. The meeting of Prakriti with Purusha is the union of individual soul with cosmic soul. Where illusion of Prakriti vanishes, the Purusha state alone remains as an infinite totality.

### Notes

1. R. N. Sarma ; *Indian Philosophy* (Orient Longman, 1972). P. 193.
2. *Ibid* : P. 189.
3. As quoted by Swami Krishnananda : *Realisation of the Absolute* (The Divine Life Society, 1972). P. 101.





## REVIEWS

*The Flute Calls Still*: By Dilip Kumar Roy. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Price: Rs. 25.

This is a volume which contains the letters of both Dilip Kumar Roy, the saint-singer, and his disciple Smt. Indira, written in the 'Sixties from time to time. They are full of the experiences of both the devotees of the Lord Krishna, the one as the Guru and the other as disciple. *Dadaji* is how the disciple calls her Guru and *Didi* is the appellation by which the disciple is addressed often.

People who have had the pleasure of listening to the ethereal music of Dilip Kumar Roy can certainly vouch for the exaltation of the spirit it could evoke. For long himself a singer and an unfatiguing traveller on the spiritual path, his guidance to Smt. Indira should have been fruitful as evidenced by the graphic description of the vision of God that she began receiving during stages of her spiritual evolution. In one of her letters she says: "I saw the Lord himself in the flame of the candle." ... She narrated in some of her letters how she had no consciousness of anything around her when in *Samadhi*. The need for a Guru for the fulfilment of the spiritual pilgrimage she had in Dilip Kumar Roy.

Sceptics will be unable to be influenced by the way the spiritual experiences are described in these pages. Dilip Kumar Roy has answered such persons thus: "How can one possibly assay or adjudicate on such phenomena with your scientific yardsticks and galvanometers, statistics and equations? And how can those of us who saw it deny that she did, in effect, 'sing in the light' when she gave us tidings of the One who sustains his devotees and withal, runs the galaxies" (P. 191). Dilip Kumar Roy in the above quotation was referring to the vision of Balagopala that his disciple Smt. Indira got during his singing of a Bhajan.



Those who are not affected by the modern cant of ocular demonstration for everything may not easily be taken in by what is contained in these letters of Smt. Indira ; but they should not forget that there is something higher that transcends all our calculations and direct perceptions.

— K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

*Yoga : The Art of the Integration* : By Rohit Mehta. Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras-20. Price : Rs. 50.

The chief merit of this presentation is that it shows how Patanjali is eminently relevant to the present psychological situation of man in the modern world. Though his aphorisms were written more than two thousand years ago, they are still pertinent in as much as they touch the fundamental principles of consciousness which is an eternal theme. In the chapter on E. S. P., Sri Mehta points out how there is a good deal of confusion between the spiritual and the occult ("psychic"). "The spiritual and the psychic are completely different, though not necessarily contradictory. It has to be noted that while a spiritual man may come in possession of psychic powers, one who consciously develops psychic powers usually remains an utter stranger to spiritual experience...Spirituality and spiritualism are completely different. Spiritualism belongs to the category of psychism, its main subject of interest being the establishment of contacts with disembodied spirits and those who have crossed the portal of death. Spirituality is the right perception of men and things, that perception which arises in a state of non-duality, where the frontiers of the mind no longer limit one's vision and understanding." (Pp. 311-12)

In these lectures on the Aphorisms of Patanjali the author deals with each Sutra in the light of modern developments in science, psychology and Yoga and underlines the truth that evolution of consciousness towards divinity is the aim of Nature. This involves a relentless co-ordination and integration of the activities of the different parts of the being, viz., the body, the life-force, the mind and the soul. To interpret the Sutras in a spirit of negation of nature is an old pastime ; Sri Mehta underlines the equation between the self and nature at a deeper level ; Patanjali points the way to realise this truth of oneself.

A very readable and in places a thought-provoking exposition.

— M. P. PANDIT

*Vijnana Bhairava or Divine Consciousness* : Translated by Jai Deva Singh. Motilal Banarsi Das, New Delhi-7. Price : Rs. 35.

Though the influence of Kashmir Saivism, variously known as *Pratyabhijana* or *Trika* or *Tantra* school of philosophy, is both



deep and lasting on Indian life and letters, the world knows precious little of it until very recently. As late as in 1972 Prof. L. N. Misra writes "Little work has been done on Kashmir Saivism and our knowledge of the system has remained scanty and based on secondary sources." (Foreword : *Kashmir Saivism*) Dr. Jai Deva Singh helps us out of the situation by bringing out important Tantric texts of this school, fully annotated and translated into English. The present volume is the third in the series, the first two being *Siva Sutra* and *Pratyabhijnaahridayam*. It is a reputed resume of the ancient Tantric text, now lost, called *Rudrayamala Tantra*, meaning the union of Siva and Sakti cast in the form of a dialogue between Bhairava and Bhairavi (Siva and Sakti), It is meant to be a practical guide for devout practitioners of Yoga seeking union with Siva. So, naturally, no attempt has been made to expand the system on which these 112 *dhaaranas* (postures) are based. However, Dr. Jai Deva Singh, who has exquisite critical apparatus and the spiritual expertise of his Guru, Lakshmanjoo, to boot, has provided all the theoretical and scholarly insights and information necessary to follow the text in his masterly introduction to the text as well as in the abundant notes appended to each of the *dhaaranas*. Though these *dhaaranas* are claimed to be based on Tantric philosophy, it is possible to trace some of them to the ancient Vedic school of thought. The learned editor is aware of this and acknowledges such possible borrowings whenever occasion arises. The editor, with his vast experience anticipates the real difficulties of the ordinary scholars and provides necessary guidance to understand the text aright. For example, on page 6, he writes: "Bhairavakritau" does not mean, "Siva of terrible form." "Bhairavakritau" means "Bhairava svarupaya." It is a locative case in the sense of *nimitta* (purpose). So "Bhairavakritau" means "for the realisation of the *svarupa* or essential nature of Bhairava." Dr. Jai Deva Singh deserves our gratitude in abundance.

*Temples and Legends of Kerala* : By K. R. Vaidyanathan.  
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay - 400 007. Price : Rs. 30.

K. R. Vaidyanathan's new book under notice introduces some twenty-five famous temples out of more than 2,200 that matter in Kerala, together with their history and legends, architectural styles and unorthodox modes of worship, rites and festivals in an eminently readable narrative style interspersed here and there with quotations not only from standard works on history, art and architecture but also from poets, philosophers and musical prodigies. The author makes a



generous use of anecdote, local tradition and biographical detail to enrich the style and entertain the reader. The photo plates at the end, so thoughtfully added, are a feast to the eye, while the railway map showing the route to the temples discussed is highly useful. The value of the book, however, does not lie in the information it imparts. It helps us realise the rich diversity and underlying cultural unity of India.

The general reader will be interested to know of the aspects of the deities that caught the imagination of the Keralite artist devotee. There are temples for Rama everywhere, but in Kerala we have temples for Lakshmana and Bharata (Kutali-manikyam) too. Perhaps the only one in India. Bharata who was eagerly awaiting Rama's return from exile is worshiped here. Krishna is worshiped in Parthasarathi temple at Aranmula but not as the giver of the *Gita* but as one who offers to slay Bhishma with his *Chakra* on the battlefield to save Arjuna, or as the Lord who killed Kamsa. The author is able to drive home the truth that in spite of the winds of materialism and Marxism, religion is very much alive in Kerala and that "the deities are, whether or not you are an *astika*, part of the very air you breath. They beckon to you like a loving mother or father and you soon realise you cannot do without them."

— DR. G. SRIRAMA MURTHY

*The Philosophy of Religion*: By S. P. Kanak. Distributors: Sterling Publishers P. Ltd., New Delhi - 110 016. Price: Rs. 150.

The author regards all the existing religions as irrational and in effect anti-humanity. They do not fit in with the scheme of modern science and inculcate renunciation of the world in favour of ecstasies in some paradise beyond. Their founders, their Avatars, are egocentric and their image has been magnified by so-called miracles concocted by their unthinking followers. But all is not lost, for the writer has a new "naturalistic" religion to offer. It is scientific, humanistic and it has been given to the world by his Guru Devatma (1850 — 1929).

This Devadharma is based on a belief system "scientifically" sound: "There is no place for God in the world of events in Nature. God is a superfluous hypothesis. The entities in Nature are embodied. They are matter-force units or body and mind units. There are no disembodied entities like soul or God in Nature. There is law of conservation of matter-force and so there is no creation. Soul is life-force and is the result of the impregnation of ovum by sperm. It is false to believe that soul is unborn, eternal, unchanging entity," etc.



Founder Devatma gives great importance to inter-personal relationships in which other Teachers woefully lack. The author has no use for the realisations or teachings of other great men; he dismisses them with a rash phrase or two. Altogether this is no cup of tea for the readers of *Triveni*.

— M. P. PANDIT

*Stories from Bhagavan.* Sri Ramanashramam, Tiruvannamalai.  
Price : Rs. 4.

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi has been known all over the world. Everyone knows of the wisdom of the Maharshi, but few people know the other aspects of his life. This little book, published on the occasion of the centenary of the Maharshi, brings out the story-teller in him. Our saints and sages have the unique gift of driving home moral and spiritual message through simple or allegorical stories. Sri Ramana Maharshi too uses the same technique here. The stories come from well-known Puranas and other works or from folklore. Whatever be their source, there is nothing literary about them. They are amazingly simple and purposeful. John Greenblatt collected fifty-six such stories and put them in lucid English. He tells us in his Preface that the Bhagavan would dramatise them wonderfully and when the passage was moving would melt into tears. The Bhagavan would tell each story again and again but the story was never felt to be stale. "Each time the story seemed new and fresh." We hope everyone will be benefited by reading these stories of delight and wisdom.

— MURTHY

#### SANSKRIT — ENGLISH

*Brihat Samhita*: By Varahamihira, with English translation by M. R. Bhat. Motilal Banarsi Das, Delhi - 110 007. Price : Rs.110.

Varahamihira is not only one of the brightest stars in the galaxy of the Indian astronomers and astrologers, but also a poet of high achievements. His *Brihat Samhita* is a mini-encyclopaedia. English translation of this text is out of print since a long time. The publishers should be thanked for bringing out this translation. The book under review is the first part of the work. Courses of planets and the seven sages, comets, stellar relationship, clouds and rainfall, fluctuations of prices, signs of meteors, comets, architecture and exploration of water springs are some of the important topics dealt herein. A long and scholarly introduction by the translator himself is richly informative. Astrology and astronomy are traced to the Vedas. A statement that week days



were introduced from west is disproved. Varahamihira's date, place and his scientific genius are discussed. The section dealing with Varahamihira as a poet and scholar is superb.

The section dealing with commentaries is exhaustive. Coming to the text proper, every verse is followed by a nice translation, and copious notes from commentaries. Charts and diagrams are there wherever necessary. Chapters 27, 34, 39, 42, 54 deserve close attention for the study of modern meteorologists, astrologers and geologists. Chapter on architecture must be of interest to modern architects also. Importance and usefulness of the work need no more be stressed.

—“SANDILYA”

### TELUGU

*Andhra Sahitya Vimarsa — Angla Prabhavamu:* By Dr. G. V. Subrahmanyam. Yuva Bharati, Andhra Saraswata Parishat Buildings, Tilak Road, Hyderabad - I. Price: Rs. 30.

As in the case of other modern Indian languages, Telugu also was influenced by English literature in the choice of forms of expression and the same has been vividly presented by Prof. K. Veerabhadra Rao in his Doctoral thesis entitled “Telugu Sahityamupai English Prabhavamu.” Following this, a work in Telugu dealing with the impact of English on Telugu literary criticism was a long-felt necessity and it is gratifying that Dr. G. V. Subrahmanyam of the Central University of Hyderabad who is well-known in Telugu literary circles as a first-rate thinker, a noted essayist and as a critic of high standing has stepped into this void and undertaken this task and ably accomplished it. He has compiled this introduction to the study of English literary criticism in all its ages, divisions, classifications and several other individual trends, and in doing so, he has at the outset adequately dealt with the history of the Telugu literary criticism with its age-wise distinctions.

In this elaborate study, Dr. G. V. Subrahmanyam's striking originality lies in assessing the places of Viswanatha Satyanarayana, the Jnanpith Award Winner, in the domain of new literary criticism, the collective influence of the European stalwarts on him and the positive contribution made by Viswanatha himself to the genre. While pointing the role of Viswanatha in the emergence of a distinct type of literary criticism which has its base in the classical models and is enriched by the Western thought, Dr. Subrahmanyam is tolerant and dogmatic. In fact, he exhibits such a scientific temper in his apprehensive power of various later movements in Telugu itself, that one feels that the writer has not made any attempt to attract the reader to a certain



attitude, but only tried his best to probe into the depths of dominating literary figures in order to enlighten us as regards the realm of critical writing in Europe in general, and in England and Andhra Desa in particular. In the last chapter of the book, the author has made a survey of the Telugu works dealing with the lives of poets, histories of literature and other vast body of critical writing that was produced in Andhra in modern times which is certainly a variety of wealth resulting from the Western impact.

This valuable book is a must for all those students of literature who seek to develop the widest range of appreciation of literature in its various forms and contents and who aspire for a sound knowledge of modern literary criticism in its various aspects which is gradually transcending the boundaries of nations and is acquiring universal acceptability.

— D. RAMALINGAM

*Pastoral Connections* : By D. R. Sarma. Price Rs. 30.

*Man and Woman* : By K. V. Chacko. Price Rs. 20.

*The Old House and Other Stories* : By Vasanta Ravindran.  
Price Rs. 25.

*Come for a coffee, please* : By Malati Rao. Price Rs. 25.

All the books are published by the Writers Workshop,  
Calcutta-45.

Indo-Anglian short story has taken a U-turn in recent years. New attitudes have been struck, new areas of experience have been exposed. A greater awareness of values in the context of increased westernisation and urbanisation in free India and a freedom from sentiment seem to distinguish the new writing sponsored by Writers Workshop of Calcutta. The four volumes of short stories cited above bear witness to the new climate of fiction-writing today. D. R. Sharma in his *Pastoral Connections* and Vasanta Ravindran in her *The Old House and Other Stories* are alike in that they are nearest to tradition in their themes and techniques. D. R. Sharma tries to re-create his native village, lying a little south of Pathankot very near the Indo-Pak border and trying to resist the winds of change, with imagination gusto and sure artist touch. "A Modern Interlude" is a powerful comment on the craze for modernity. Sharma has rightly put his accusing figure on man and woman relationship, a dominant theme in modern writing. Modernization brings alienation in its wake, but Sharma says: "A wakeful remembrance of my village is a bastion against stylized alienation, a kelson of my total awareness." Vasanta Ravindran makes her *debut* with the



bunch of ten stories collected under the title *The Old House and Other Stories*. Five of these ten stories focus on sex and marriage in modern times. Sex and marriage are firmly rooted in economic necessities, she seems to suggest, although other values, too, merit recognition.

In his book *Man and Woman* (a first collection, too) P. V. Chacko is concerned with urban life in the main. Casual sex, extra premarital and organistic sex have become the order of the day. Purity of personal conduct, family responsibility even basic humanistic ideas are thrown to winds with no qualms of conscience. False values of old based on caste and creed too contribute their mite to swap the relation between man and woman. If there are some who stand stoutly for selfless love and humanity in this wasteland of modern living, they are bound to die in a wilderness, unwept, unhonoured and unsung as the dreamer in "The Dreamers." Maybe it is a way of indicating the death of idealism in modern world. The stream of consciousness technique is put to good use in the story. Malati Rao too deals with urban life in her second volume of stories *Come for a coffee, please*. She is sophisticated in her choice of material. She offers a peep into the average mind of an educated Indian who is "willing to wound but afraid to strike" in the story, "The brocade handbag." A Britisher insults a group of Indian scholars at a farewell party. The Indian community wants an apology from the British Professor, but instead of demanding it directly, they destroy the property of the Indian scholar who happened to play host on the occasion, in order to coerce the Britisher to apologize. "The Metaphor of Stone" is a distant cousin of Charles Lamb's "Dream Children." The title story is again full of psychological interest. Sumana, an educated Indian woman goes to Paris in search of experience, but fails to drink life to the dregs as her Indianness surfaces in a significant moment of life. She hastens to board a bus, struggling free from the rock-like arms a young Saudi who invites her to take a cup of coffee with him. "In Job's Comforter", she depicts the agony of an unrecognised writer. Perhaps she has the critical stance of the Indo-Anglian writer at the back of her mind while portraying the character of Venkatesh. His spirited retort to his unsympathetic critic, Mr. Sarma, a votary at the shrine of economics, seems to be a defence for Indo-Anglian writing comparable to the classic defence of Kamala Das. "You are mistaken to the core. It is not necessary at all for a writer to lead a sensational life. Perception, observation — these make a writer. Half a dozen characters from this very street is all that I need." The insights she offers of modern Indian life are significant,



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*Paralysis* : By Chandrakanta Bakshi. Writers Workshop,  
Calcutta - 45. Price : Rs. 25.

At a time when the literary scene in India is full of violence and sex, this translated Gujarati off-beat novel, *Paralysis*, comes fresh as morning breeze. Prof. Chandrakanta Bakshi is a prolific Gujarati writer with nineteen novels to his credit. The present novel enjoys great popularity. A text-book in four universities, it has been translated into other Indian languages like Marathi. It was a stage and screen success too. Wherein lies its secret of success? It seems it owes its success to its theme and technique in the main. The author tells us how a paralysis patient, Prof. Aram Shah, on the wrong side of forty, recovers marvellously under the extraordinary love and care bestowed on him by a middle-aged widowed matron, Ashika, aged 39 and wedded to her profession leaves the hospital fit as a race-horse in the end. The meeting of the two mature but unhappy minds result in a psychological exploration of the values of sex, love, marriage and life in general. At the end of the novel a possibility of marriage of convenience, "a part marriage" as Prof. Shah playfully suggests in one of his conversations with Ashika, between them is hinted at. The story at this level reads like a Shavian drama of discussion. The sprouting of an urge for life on the part of death-wishing patient on one hand and the birth of a new vision on the part of the lonely, routine crushed matron on the other is managed with masterly skill by the novelist. The psychological theme assaults us with a freshness all its own. The author has scored a different success with his dexterous handling of flash-back method of narration. A casual remark or gesture of Ashika instantly reminds him of an event in his past life—his marriage and domestic happiness, the birth of his daughter Manisha, the death of his wife, his supreme sacrifice for his daughter who wants to pay her debt of gratitude but was unable to do so on account of her hasty, star-crossed marriage and her final act of suicide whose tragic weight sent him to hospital as a patient of paralysis. The method enables him to unite the physical and psychological levels of actions at the same time showing how the past and present coalesce to form a new whole and a new vision of life. The novel is a triumph of technique more than anything else.

— DR. G. SRIRAMA MURTHY











Compiled  
1999-2000



